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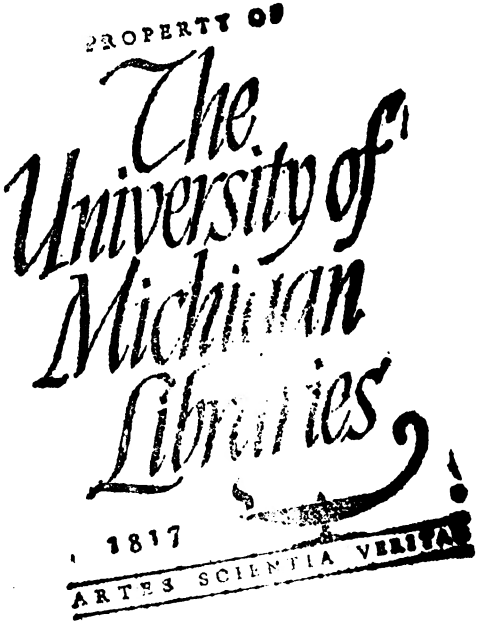
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AND OTHER

PRACTICAL WORKS,

Of the Late Reverend and Learned

Mr. RALPH ERSKINE,

Miniſter of the Goſpel in Dunfermline.

CONSISTING OF

Above One Hundred and Fifty SERMONS,
beſides his Poetical Pieces.

IN TEN LARGE VOLUMES OCTAVO.

To which is prefixed,

An Account of the Author's Life and Writings,
with an Elegiac Poem, and large Contents.

Go, preach the goſpel to every creature, Mark xvi. 15.

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according to the meaſure of his faith, that his labour is not in vain in the Lord.

But now, the verſe where my text lies, ſeems to be an explication of the firſt part of the apoſtle's ſong; he had ſaid, "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?" But if any ſhould aſk, What mean you, Paul, by the ſting of death? Why, ſays he, *The ſting of death is ſin:* ſo that, take away ſin, and then death hath no ſting; no ſtrength to hurt or harm us. Well, but may it be ſaid, Where lies the ſtrength of ſin? and whence hath it ſuch ſtrength? The anſwer is, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law;* as ſin is the ſtrength of death, ſo the law is the ſtrength of ſin. Sin puts arms in the hand of death, and the law puts arms in the hand of ſin: *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.*

Where you may notice theſe three things following.

1. The grand evil that ruins all mankind, here ſpoken of, namely, SIN; this is that which makes us need a Saviour, whoſe name is JESUS, becauſe he ſaves his people from their ſin. The apoſtle ſpeaks not here of any tranſient act of ſin, but even of the root and fountain of ſin; the corruption and depravation of nature, together with the luſts and affections of the fleſh.

2. You have here the quality of ſin; STRENGTH is aſcribed to it. There are ſeveral attributes this monſter hath, particularly theſe two, guilt and filth; but *ſtrength* is the compend of all its other qualities. It hath ſtrength to defile, and ſtrength to deſtroy; ſtrength to kill, and ſtrength to damn. The ſtrength of ſin makes us ſtand in need of a ſtrong Saviour, and of that help which is laid upon One that is mighty.

3. You have here the accidental ſource or riſe of the ſtrength of ſin, namely, the LAW; the law of works, commanding obedience, as the condition of eternal life, and diſcharging diſobedience on pain of eternal death. The moral law, under the form of a covenant of works, is the law the apoſtle here ſpeaks of; and this law, as it is violated and broken by our apoſtacy and rebellion againſt God; for, as this law is become ſo weak through the fleſh, Rom. viii. 3. that it cannot juſtify nor ſanctify a ſinner, nor ſave a breaker of it; ſo it is become powerful

powerful only to condemn, and powerful to damn the ſinner; and this it does, by giving ſin a power to ruin, condemn, and deſtroy the ſinner. As ſin, in a manner took juſtifying ſtrength from the law, ſo the law gives condemning ſtrength to ſin, leaving the ſinner under its curſe: and, becauſe ſin violated the holy command of the law, the law gives ſin a commanding power over the ſinner, and makes ſin to riſe, and rage, and reign over the ſinner, ſo as it commands him to ſerve like a drudge and a ſlave. This the law does, both by virtue of its curſe, and by virtue of its command; the power of ſin being a part of the curſe of the law, and conſequence of the command. Not that the holy, juſt, and good law of God, that commands holineſs, can poſſibly command ſin or unholineſs; but by reaſon of our corruption, which, like water, the more it is dammed up, the more it ſwells. The command of holineſs excites and ſtirs up the rule and command of ſin over us; which bears no more reflection upon the holineſs of the law, than the ſtink of a dunghill, raiſed and excited by the heat of the ſun, reflects any indignity upon, or in the leaſt ſtains the purity of the beams thereof. The more pure and refulgent the beams of the ſun are, the more influence it hath for ſtirring up the filthy vapours of the dunghill; ſo, the more holy that the law is, the more does it excite the filthy ſteams, and raiſe and exaſperate the impurity of corruption. But in what reſpect the law is the ſtrength of ſin, may be ſhewed more at large in the ſequel.

Having offered this ſhort view of the words, there are two doctrines might be treated from them.

I. "That ſin is a very ſtrong and powerful thing."

II. "That the ſtrength of ſin is the law:" Or thus, "That the law of works is the ſtrength of ſin to a ſinner that hath violated and broken it."

I intend, thro' divine aid, to illuſtrate both theſe propoſitions; but ſhall confine myſelf to the firſt at this time. If we get right views of the ſtrength of ſin, it will commend *the ſtrength of a* Saviour to us.

DOCT. I. *That ſin is a very ſtrong and powerful thing.*

In treating of which, I would eſſay to do the following things.

I. Speak a little of the nature of ſin; and ſhow what it is.

II. I would enquire into the ſtrength of ſin, in the qualities and degrees of its ſtrength.

III. I would ſhew how the ſtrength of ſin diſcovers itſelf.

IV. Whence the ſtrength of ſin comes, and where it lies.

V. Draw ſome inferences from this for application.

I. We propoſe to ſpeak a little concerning the nature of ſin. I ſhall confine myſelf to theſe two accounts of it, namely, (1.) That it is a tranſgreſſion of the law, 1 John iii. 4. (2.) That it is an oppoſition to God the Lawgiver and enmity againſt God, Rom. viii. 7.

1. Conſider it as it is a tranſgreſſion of the law; and all mankind are tranſgreſſors from the womb, ever ſince Adam and Eve began the rebellion: we daily tranſgreſs it, in thought, word, and deed. It is ſtrange to conſider how many poor ignorant ſinners expect to be juſtified by that law which they are daily tranſgreſſing; which declares, that they know not themſelves to be ſinners and tranſgreſſors thereof. They ſay they are ſinners, but they do not believe what they ſay; or, if they believe they are ſinners, they do not believe they are ſuch ſinners, but that the law may bear with them; for they cannot ſee ſuch depravity in their actions, as that the law ſhould condemn them; and when once they imagine, that the law will not condemn them, they fancy next, that the law will juſtify them. Some, whoſe lives and actions are not evidently groſs and profane, may be filled with foolish ignorant thoughts of this ſort, that the law hath little to ſay againſt them; yea, that they have done all theſe things from their youth up. O dreadful arrogance and ignorance, for a brat of hell to imagine that he hath not tranſgreſſed the law by any *wicked deed!*

But

But if any be ſo groſly ignorant, as to juſtify their deeds as being conform to the law; let them ſet the law of God, and even their words in oppoſition to each other, and ſee if they have tranſgreſſed the law: for, tho' in many things we offend all; yet, "If any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect man," ſays the apoſtle, Jam. iii. 2. But where is there even ſuch perfection as this among the children of men, if you conſider how every command of the law is broken by the ordinary ſpeech of men?—Why, every word that ſavours of atheiſm, unbelief, and contempt of God, and carnal confidence, is a breach of the firſt command.—Every word that ſavours of diſreſpect to divine ordinances, whether preaching, praying, reading, meditating, communicating, and the like, is a breach of the ſecond command.—Every word that tends to the abuſing of God's name, by raſh ſwearing, minched oaths, carnal praying, formal devotion, and hypocritical proteſtations and profeſſion, is a breach of the third command. Every idle and unprofitable word on week-days, and eſpecially on Sabbath-days, whereon we are in a peculiar manner called to abſtain from our own words, is a breach of the fourth command.—Every diſreſpectful and diſhonourable word of ſuperiors, inferiors, or equals, and eſpecially of parents and relations, whether natural, civil, or ſpiritual, is a breach of the fifth command.—Every malicious, invective, bitter, offenſive, and killing word, that cuts like a ſword, is a breach of the ſixth command. Every immodeſt, unchaſte, ſenſual, and laſcivious word, that ſavours of a vile, polluted mind, is a breach of the ſeventh command.—Every cheating word, as in buying and ſelling, when you vilify too much what you buy, and magnify too much what you ſell, is a breach of the eighth command.—Every railing word, every reproachful, backbiting, lying, and falſe accuſation, whether to, or of your neighbours, is a breach of the ninth command. And, finally, every murmuring and fretful word, that ſavours of diſcontent, grudging, and envy, is a breach of the tenth command.

You then that hope for juſtification by the works of the law, if *you be not* conſcious of your ill works, what

ſay

ſay you of your words? If in word you have offended, know, that by your words you ſhall be condemned. Why, ſay you, Who are they that want their faults of that ſort? But, whatever words eſcape me, yet, I hope, I have a good heart to God. Alas, man! will you examine that heart of yours with the good law of God, and ſee if it be a good heart or not; and if it be found a tranſgreſſor of the law, then the fountain is defiled, and never call it good again. If you be chargeable with any of theſe tranſgreſſions of the law, that I have named, whether in your works or words, know, that the heart is the very fountain of theſe evil words and actions; for, out of the heart they proceed, Mat. xv. 19.; and if the fruit be evil, the root cannot be good: if the ſtreams be bitter, the fountain cannot be ſweet. The ſmoke of vain words and evil actions, that comes out at the chimney of your daily converſation, declares that there is a fire within doors, a furnace of corruption in the heart.

But more particularly, will you ſet your heart and the law together a little, and ſee what it is.—Compare your heart with the firſt command, and you will find it to be nothing but a throne of iniquity, a receptacle of falſe gods, where a thouſand other gods are worſhipped. —Compare it with the ſecond command, and then you will ſee it to be nothing but a chamber of imagery, filled with ſo many images, and miſrepreſentations of God.—Compare it with the third command, and you will find nothing elſe but a bench of blaſphemy, iſſuing forth indignities and affronts to the name of God.— Compare it with the fourth command, and you will find it to be nothing but a dunghill of profanity, a play-houſe of idleneſs, and a ſacrilegious waſter of holy time.— Compare it with the fifth command, and you will ſee it to be nothing but a palace of pride, and a tower of ſelf-exaltation, ſetting yourſelf above all others.—Compare it with the ſixth command, and here it will be found to be nothing but the devil's ſhambles, and a ſlaughter-houſe of malice and murder; for, *He that hates his brother in his heart, is a murderer.*—Compare your heart with the ſeventh command, and you will find it nothing *but a cage of unclean* birds, unclean thoughts, vile affections.

fections.—Compare it with the eighth command, and then you will ſee it to be nothing but a tabernacle of robbers, though your hand ſhould be free of theft and robbery: but if you have ſtolen all that your heart went after, many a horſe and cow hath it ſtolen; yea, many a fine houſe and yard hath your heart robbed your neighbour of.—Compare it with the ninth command, and you will find it to be nothing but a fountain of calumny, either inventing ill tales of your neighbour, or exaggerating and magnifying any falſe report; or tickled with, and glad of any occaſion to caſt a blot upon his name.—Compare your hearts with the tenth command, and you will find it alſo to be nothing but a temple of idolatry: for, *Covetouſneſs is idolatry*, ſays the apoſtle. As many objects as the covetous heart purſues after, ſo many idols does it fall down before,—And now, tell me, after all, Is that a good heart? Nay, alas! every imagination of it is evil, and evil continually; yea, it is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked.

Thus ſin is a tranſgreſſion of the law, whether in heart, ſpeech, or behaviour; and thus we are all tranſgreſſors: yea, though we could free ourſelves of actual ſins, which is impoſſible, and ſay that we are clean in thought, word, and action: yet as we have ſinned in Adam, Rom. v. 12; ſo our very natures are ſinful and corrupt, and deſtitute of conformity to the law; as void of righteouſneſs, as Chriſt was free of ſin; and altogether filthy, as Chriſt is altogether lovely. The law requires holineſs of nature, heart and way, and curſes every one that continues not in all things required therein, Gal. iii. 10. Why then, the meaning of that word to a ſinner, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, is as much as to ſay, O ſinner, you have forfeit eternal life by your not keeping the commandment, and thou art doomed to eternal death, which, as ſure as God lives, will be your everlaſting lot, if the law get not a better keeper than you in your room and ſtead: the reaſon then, why I declare you tranſgreſſors of the law, is, that I may recommend Chriſt the more to you as the end of the law for righteouſneſs. "Sin is a *tranſgreſſion of the law.*"

2. Conſider it as it is an oppoſition to God, the Law-giver: it is called enmity againſt God. Some have a notion of ſin, that it is a tranſgreſſion of God's law, and yet not a due ſenſe of ſin in the intrinſical evil of it, as it is an oppoſition to God's nature: as every actual ſin, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, is a walking contrary to God, Lev. xxvi. 27.; ſo ſin, in its nature, is a contrariety to God's nature, and a deſpiſing of him, as well as diſpleaſing to him, 1 Sam. ii. 30.: yea, nothing is ſo oppoſite to God, as ſin. God is wiſdom, ſin is folly; God is holineſs, ſin is filthineſs; God is juſtice, ſin is iniquity; God is goodneſs itſelf, ſin is badneſs itſelf; God is faithfulneſs, ſin is treachery; God is light, ſin is darkneſs; God is life, ſin is death; God is beauty, ſin is deformity; God is majeſty, ſin is baſeneſs; God is love, ſin is enmity. Sin is ſo oppoſite to God, that if the leaſt drop of it ſhould get into his nature, he would ceaſe to be God. The wicked think, becauſe God is patient and long-ſuffering, therefore he approves of their ſin, and is of the ſame judgment with themſelves; "Becauſe I held my peace, thou thoughteſt that I was altogether like thyſelf; but I will reprove thee, and ſet thine iniquities in order before thee," Pſalm l. 21. Know, when you have any ſuch thoughts of God as this, you do blaſpheme God; for, if God did approve of your ſin, he would ceaſe to be God, he would be God no longer: why ſo, think you? Even becauſe then God would not be infinitely holy: now, holineſs is his being; therefore, if he ſhould ceaſe to be infinitely holy, he would ceaſe to be God: ſo oppoſite is ſin to God, that if he did not hate ſin as much as he does, he would ceaſe to be God. If his hatred of ſin were leſs than it is, then he would not be infinitely holy; and infinite holineſs muſt needs have infinite hatred againſt ſin. This is the very thing that makes ſin to be an infinite evil, objectively conſidered: and whatever ſome may think of ſin, ſurely we cannot ſpeak enough of the evil of it. You that have but light thoughts of ſin, you have light and ſlight thoughts of God: and you that have light thoughts of ſin, have light thoughts of Chriſt; it cannot be a light matter, *that the eternal* God gave his eternal Son to be a ſacri-

fice for, otherwiſe we had been eternal ſacrifices to his incenſed juſtice. The more diſhonourably that we ſpeak of ſin, the more honourably muſt we ſpeak of Chriſt, the Saviour that ſaves from it. Nothing expoſes ſin ſo much as the goſpel of Chriſt, declaring him to be the ſacrifice for ſin; which ſays, that the infinite hatred that God bears to ſin, is equal to the infinite love that he bears to his own Son; and that his hatred to ſin is as deep, as his love to Chriſt is high; and that the depth of the one, and the height of the other, are both equally infinite. As Chriſt's death is the great ſacrifice for ſin, that we commemorate at this occaſion; ſo the view of the infinite value thereof, relates to the infinite evil of ſin. As there would be no need for Chriſt, as a Saviour, if there were no ſin; ſo there would be no need for ſuch a Saviour as he is, if ſin were not ſuch an evil as it is: and as the guilt of it cannot be expiated without ſuch an infinite ranſom as he gave; ſo the power of it cannot be deſtroyed but by ſuch an almighty arm as he hath, who alone is able to ſave to the uttermoſt.——But this leads me, having thus far touched the nature, to ſpeak next of the ſtrength of ſin.

II. The ſecond thing propoſed here is, to enquire a little into the ſtrength of ſin. The devil is called the ſtrong man, yet he is without; but ſin is the ſtrong man within; or, as the apoſtle calls it, the old man, Eph. iv. 22.; where he exhorts even the ſaints to put off the old man. Sin is no child, but a man: it is no young ſtripling, but an antient, ſtrong, old man; one that is grown in years, and carries power, command, authority with it in the beſt of God's children: and if it many times powerfully prevails in and over them, how powerfully does it reign in the reſt of the world? But, that the ſtrength of ſin may be farther opened, I ſhall lay before you, 1. Some of the qualities of the ſtrength of ſin. 2. The degrees of its ſtrength, poſitive, comparative, and ſuperlative.

1ſt, As to the quality of the ſtrength of ſin: what ſort of a ſtrength it hath, may appear in theſe ten qualities and *bad properties of* it.

1. Sin

1. Sin hath a commanding ſtrength, requiring obedience, and obliging its ſervants, to obey it in the luſts thereof, Rom. vi. 12. 16. Indeed, the commands of ſin are very unlawful and unreaſonable; yet it commands men to go, and they go; to come, and they come: and men obey the commands of ſin, by diſobeying the commands of God; for, when they do not what God injoins them, they do what ſin requires them.

2. Sin hath a condemning ſtrength: as ſin is a great commander, ſo the commanding power of ſin, when yielded to, delivers us over to the condemning power of ſin. Now, what this condemning power of ſin is, the apoſtle ſhews plainly, Jam. i. 15. "Sin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death." Sin is a faithleſs and ſhameleſs tyrant and tempter; for, at firſt it promiſes life and immunity from death, ſaying, like the devil that ſinned from the beginning, "You ſhall not ſurely die:" yet, no ſooner does a man obey the command of ſin, than it condemns him to death; "The wages of ſin is death," Rom. vi. 23. Hence,

3. Sin hath a deceiving ſtrength. See Heb. iii. 13. *Exhort one-another while it is called to-day, leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin:* hence the luſts of the fleſh are called deceitful luſts, Eph. iv. 22. Sin powerfully deceives, by blinding the mind, corrupting the judgment, hardening the heart, alluring the affections, and perſuading the ſinner that there are ſome things forbidden in the law that are good and profitable, and may be done without any ſcruple of conſcience. Sometimes it will perſuade the greedy-minded worldly man, that is thinking how to enrich himſelf, that to do it by the ſubtilty of his pate, the forgery of his tongue, the villainy of his hand, and by violent means, is an eaſier and ſweeter way than to toil and labour to inrich himſelf by honeſt means. Sometimes it will perſuade the ſinner, that there is no hell, no fear of puniſhment; or, if there be, yet he may afterwards repent, and prevent it; and ſo he is emboldened to ſin, and deceived.

4. Sin hath a working ſtrength; *When we were in the fleſh, the motions of ſin that were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death,* Rom. vii. 5.

And,

And, ver. 8. "Sin taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence." Sin, then, and natural corruption, is no idle thing; no, by no means: it hath an affecting and working power, to bring forth evil notions. Hence, James i. 15. "When luſt is conceived, it bringeth forth ſin:" and the fleſh is ſaid to luſt againſt the Spirit, Gal. v. 17. By reaſon of corruption, there is an inclination and a proneneſs of all the faculties of the ſoul to that which is evil.

5. Sin hath a conquering and captivating ſtrength: the children of God themſelves are many times brought into captivity to it; "I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members," Rom. vii. 23. And if it ſometimes carry all before it, in a manner, where there is grace, how muſt it be where there is no grace, and where the man is under the law, and not under grace? Surely it carries them whitherſoever it pleaſes, except in ſo far as the man is under the reſtraint of providence.

6. Sin hath a defiling and polluting ſtrength; "To the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conſcience is defiled," Tit. i. 15. Sin defiles the mind, defiles the conſcience, defiles the will, defiles the affections, defiles the memory, defiles the imagination, defiles the thoughts, defiles the words, defiles the actions, and defiles and ſtains all the duties the man puts his hand to: it defiles his hearing, defiles his reading, defiles his praying, defiles his meditating, defiles his communicating, defiles his conferring with others; and, in a word, defiles ſoul and body, inward and outward man; yea, defiles and infects neighbours, friends, ſtrangers, and all that come near to it.

7. Sin hath a dementing ſtrength, to make people mad; *They are mad upon idols*, Jer. l. 38. Sin makes men nothing but mad fools, and beſide themſelves.—We reckon him a fool that would drink a cup of poiſon: that is what the ſinner does. Is he not a fool that would deſpiſe his food? So do ſinners, that deſpiſe Chriſt and the goſpel. Is he not a mad fool, that would prefer a

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ſhadow to a ſubſtance? So are they, that prefer earth to heaven, and the things of time to theſe of eternity. Hence alſo,

8. Sin hath a transforming ſtrength, inſomuch, that when it comes to a height, it turns the ſoul to a devil. This muſt be a great ſtrength, that can turn a man to a devil. What are wicked men, in whom ſin reigns, and rages, and is come to a height, but like ſo many devils? It can even turn diſciples into devils; "I have choſen you twelve, and one of you is a devil," John vi. 70. Yea, ſuch is the ſtrength of it, that it can, in ſome reſpect, turn a ſaint to a devil, at leaſt to act the part of one: hence Chriſt ſays to Peter, a ſaint, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* The godly man, out of a miſtaken affection to his Maſter, ſpoke the language of Satan: and therefore received this ſharp reprimand from his Lord. Ye need not wonder at this, for ſin turned angels to devils; the ſin that the angels did commit, preſently turned them to devils: therefore you need not think ſtrange, if ſin hath ſuch a transforming power, as to turn men and women into devils.

9. Sin hath a weakening and wounding ſtrength; it weakens the hands even of ſaints, that they cannot do what they would, Rom. vii. 15. How much more is the Chriſtleſs ſinner under an utter inability and incapacity to do any good thing? Nay, we are by nature without ſtrength; for the ſtrength of ſin hath taken away the ſtrength of man. So weak by reaſon of remaining ſin and corruption is the ſaint, that he is not ſufficient of himſelf to think any thing as of himſelf, but his ſufficiency is of God, 2 Cor. iii. 5. What then can a Chriſtleſs ſinner do? Let Arminians, who magnify the power of nature, tell. Sin hath weakened our hands; yea, and wounded us to death. For,

10. Sin hath a killing and ſlaying ſtrength; *Sin, taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me,* Rom. vii. 11. Every ſin we commit, is a wound and a ſtab to our ſouls. And, Oh! my friends, we have wounded ourſelves with ſin, and rendered ourſelves liable to eternal death. Let us not remain and *die in our wounds,* without ſearching and ſeeking for recovery,

recovery, relief, and redreſs. As the ſmart of a wound ſends us to the ſurgeon, may the ſmart of our ſins ſend us to the phyſician of ſouls, to Jeſus Chriſt: his precious blood alone can cure that deadly wound. The Son of man is lifted up, like the brazen ſerpent among the Iſraelites, that whoſoever look to him may be healed of the deadly wound. If you ſay, what warrant have I to look to him for healing? Why, you need no better than his own call and command, 'Look to me, and be ſaved.' But, will I come ſpeed, and be ſucceſsful? Yea, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out;" even ſo, him that looks to me, I will not fail to ſave.

But, ſay you, my wounds are old and feſtered, and, I fear, incurable; I have had them now theſe many years: If I had come to Chriſt in time, perhaps, he might have cured me; but now, I think, he will not.

To this we reply; It is, indeed, very dangerous to fight many years under Satan's banner, where you ſhall get ſcar upon ſcar, and wound upon wound, to the hazarding of your ſoul's everlaſting death. The danger is exceeding great, and it will be a wonder of mercy, if Chriſt undertake the cure: but, ſince wonders of mercy are many times performed by him, therefore, be your wounds old or new, it is all a matter to him, and to the Father's infinite, boundleſs, bottomleſs mercy in him; and therefore, in a way of looking to the mercy-ſeat, ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt, there is yet hope in Iſrael concerning you.—If you ſay, Such is the ſtrength of ſin that you have been ſpeaking of, and the ſtrength of unbelief, that I cannot come, I cannot believe, I cannot turn to God in Chriſt. Why, Sirs, for what end do we point out the ſtrength of ſin to you, but that you may ſee your utter inability to ſave yourſelves, and that you may look to him, in whom almighty ſtrength is, for working faith, and drawing you? Therefore, O cry to him, and plead with him, that the right-hand of the Lord may do valiantly, in delivering you: but reſt not ſatisfied in ſaying you cannot come, while the matter is, you will not come; you have no ſtrength, becauſe you have no will. If you were willing,

ſtrength is at hand; the day of your willingneſs is the day of his power; "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power." When the will is gained to Chriſt, the power of Chriſt hath been there, and will be more and more.—But, that you may ſee ſtill the more need of the ſtrength of Chriſt, take a further view of the ſtrength of ſin,

2*dly*, In the degrees of its ſtrength. And here you may conſider the ſtrength of ſin in a poſitive, comparative, and ſuperlative manner.

[1.] Poſitively, ſin hath a manifold ſtrength. If we look further into the ſcriptural account thereof, you will find, that,

1. Sin hath the ſtrength of a law; hence called the law of ſin and death, Rom. viii. 2. What this law requires, that men do by their commiſſions; and what this law forbids, that men forbear by their omiſſions. And what is required by this law? Even all acts of enmity againſt God. And, what is forbidden by it? Even all acts of duty towards God.

2. Sin has the ſtrength of a king. Where there is a law, there is a lawgiver, a legiſlator; and ſin is both law and lawgiver, for it reigns like a king: hence ſin is ſaid to reign, Rom. vi. 12. "Let not ſin reign in your mortal body."

3. Sin hath the ſtrength of a conqueror. Some kings are weak and impotent, and cannot be ſtiled conquerors; but ſin is both a king and a conqueror, a victorious conqueror. All the myriads of fallen angels, that are now devils; and all the millions of fallen men that have been, and are in the world, are ſo many black trophies of the conqueſt thereof.

4. Sin hath the ſtrength of a tower and ſtrong hold: and hence the weapons of the goſpel-warfare are ſaid to be mighty thro' God, to the pulling down theſe ſtrong holds, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. And many a pull do they take before they be pulled wholly down, even though every pull that does any execution, muſt be a pull of omnipotency.

5. Sin hath the ſtrength of an army. Sin, even in *believers*, is compared to an army; they are ſaid to have

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in them a company of two armies, an army of luſts and an army of graces; and the former army ſometimes prevails againſt the latter. How ſtrong muſt the army of hell be in theſe that want grace, and have no army to oppoſe it?

6. Sin hath the ſtrength of a mountain, the advantage of the ground, even in the children of grace; their corruptions, like the Canaanites, have poſſeſſion, old poſſeſſion, and they keep the mountain: yea, ſin and corruption themſelves, are compared to high and ſtrong mountains, mountains of Bether, and hills of ſeparation. When Chriſt comes, he is ſaid to come ſkipping on the mountains, and leaping over the hills. "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before our Zerubbabel thou ſhalt become a plain."

7. Sin hath the ſtrength of a priſon; it is a dark priſon, a cloſe priſon, a ſtrong priſon: and ſinners are called priſoners; and hence the work of a Saviour is called the opening of the priſon, Iſa. lxi. 1.

8. Sin hath the ſtrength of a chain. Of all men, ſlaves are in the worſt circumſtances; of all ſlaves, priſoners are worſt; and of all priſoners, theſe that are in chains and fetters. Sinners are not only ſlaves, but priſoners; not only priſoners but in chains within their priſon, held in the bond of iniquity, ſhut up in unbelief, as in a priſon and chain: and ſo ſtrait is the chain, that their hands are in chains, they cannot work; their feet in chains, they cannot walk; their head chained down, that they cannot look up to God for mercy; their heart in chains, that they cannot ſo much as deſire the Lord Jeſus to looſe, and ſave, and deliver them. But then,

[2.] Conſider the ſtrength of ſin comparatively, and you will find it ſtronger than many ſtrong things.

1. Sin is ſtronger than all the children of men; for it hath made them all its captives; yea and willing ſubjects. As it is ſaid of Chriſt, "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power;" ſo, ſuch is the ſtrength of ſin, that we may ſay, it hath made millions of willing ſubjects and ſlaves to it in the day of its power; and the day of its helliſh power is always till a day of divine power come to conquer it.

2. Sin is ſtronger than affliction, no rod will drive it away; Iſa. xi. 13. "The people turn not to him that ſmites them, neither do they ſeek the Lord:" nay, they are apt to revolt more and more; Iſa. lvii. 17. "For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him; yet he went on frowardly in the way of his heart."

3. As it is ſtronger than affliction, ſo it is ſtronger than conviction. Many go to hell with a boſom-full of convictions: and, does not ſin hurry people to run its errands by a multitude of wicked actions, and that over the belly of a thouſand convictions, conſcience flying in their face for omitting ſuch a duty, or committing ſuch a treſpaſs; yet ſin maſters it.

4. Sin is ſtronger than warnings, calls, and all external means; for it makes men ſlight all theſe as trifles, and ſtand out againſt them. Sin is not daunted with the threatenings of hell and wrath; "Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed, therefore the heart of the children of men is ſet in them to do evil." Neither can it be allured with the promiſes of the goſpel; "Who hath believed our report?" Again,

5. Sin is ſtronger than reſolutions, vows, and promiſes. Perhaps you have reſolved an hundred times, and ſolemnly vowed againſt ſuch ſins; but all your vows and reſolutions have been but like flax or tow before the fire of a new temptation. Your legal weapons of warfare againſt ſin are too weak; your leviathan luſts, they but laugh at the ſhaking of your ſpear. Again,

6. Sin is ſtronger than the world. The frowns and flatteries of the world are very ſtrong, very deceitful and enſnaring; but ſin in the heart is yet more ſtrong and deceitful: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked." Sin is ſtronger than all the good examples and good education of the world, let be the evil things in it.

7. But no wonder that it be ſtronger than the world; for it is ſtronger than the devil, the God of this world. The devil may tempt, but he cannot compel, as ſin does; he may work upon the fancy, but he cannot conquer the will, as ſin does: ſin does all that work to *his hand, and ſo* his work is the more eaſy.

8. Sin

8. Sin is ſtronger than death and the grave. Death itſelf cannot kill ſin: death hath deſtroyed millions of millions of men and women, but it never deſtroyed one ſin. The power of death is very great, inſomuch that none among mere men could ever yet either withſtand the arreſt of death, nor break the priſon of death, which is the grave; yet it is eaſier to bring a dead body out of the grave, and to raiſe it to life; than to raiſe a dead ſoul out of the grave of ſin. The dead bodies will not reſiſt, as the ſoul dead in treſpaſſes will do. Yea,

9. Sin is ſtronger than hell; for all the flames of hell cannot burn out the droſs of ſin and corruption: all the torments of the damned will not make them ceaſe from blaſpheming the name of God, Rev. xvi. 9. 11.; where you may learn, that all the torments of hell will not make a man repent, but rather increaſe his impenitency and augment his blaſphemy. What ſhall I ſay?

10. Sin is not only ſtronger than the ſufferings of hell, but ſtronger than the ſuburbs of heaven; I mean, it is ſtronger than real grace, which is the beginning of heaven. It is not only ſtronger than common grace, for common grace can hardly ſtand before a common temptation; but ſtronger than real habitual grace. Peter had a large ſtock of habitual grace, yet ſin was ſtronger, and brought him down to the ground by a baſe denial of his Lord: Paul had a great meaſure of true grace, and yet he was led captive to the law of ſin that was in his members, Rom. vii. 23. till a new recruit of auxiliary grace came from the Lord Jeſus to him. Sin is not only ſtronger than the common motions of the Spirit, which men through the power of ſin do reſiſt every day; but it is ſtronger than ſpecial influences, formerly received, till new ſupplies of influences come from the glorious Head; ſtronger than former influences, till a new communication come; ſtronger than former communications, till once a new manifeſtation come; ſtronger than former manifeſtations, till new divine aids ſtill ſucceed. Thus it is ſtronger than the very ſuburbs of heaven; and you need not think ſtrange of this: for, what if I ſhall ſay, and prove, that ſin is ſtronger than per-

fect holineſs, and the formal immediate viſion of God in heaven, when it is poſſible for ſin to get in its hand there, as you know it did once among the glorious angels? Notwithſtanding of the ſtrong bulwark of perfect holineſs and formal viſion of God that they were bleſſed with, ſin brake in upon them, and brought down legions of them: it overcame them, ſo as now they are devils, under the rule and government of ſin. If ſin then brought devils and men from their excellency while they were in their beſt eſtate, you need not think ſtrange that we ſay ſin is ſtronger than that which may be called the ſuburbs of heaven; and therefore, little wonder that you find ſin to be ſo ſtrong, that it is much ſtronger than your prayers and tears: may be, for this you beſought the Lord thrice, as Paul did in a like caſe; yea, perhaps, three hundred times, and yet the bow of ſin abides in ſtrength. Alas! ſin is ſtronger than prayers and tears, ſtronger than ſighs and groans; it is ſtronger than afflictions and enlargements, ſtronger than ſermons and ſacraments. Oh! a greater ſtrength than all that, is requiſite for pulling down the ſtrength of ſin; and if you get a view of the ſtrength of ſin this day, ſo as to be led out of yourſelf, and out of your duties, and a little further than means and ordinances to the ſtrength of the Redeemer, it would be a very good communion-ſeaſon.

[3.] Conſider the ſtrength of ſin ſuperlatively, or in the ſuperlative degree. I muſt tell you, ſin is not only a ſtrong thing, and ſtronger than many things that I have named, but alſo it is the ſtrongeſt thing in nature, the ſtrongeſt thing in hell, and the ſtrongeſt thing out of heaven. Particularly,

1. Sin is the ſtrongeſt weight and burden, the ſtrongeſt preſſure that ever was, the moſt burdenſome thing in the world; for it is a burden to the great God: No wonder then that the whole creation groan under the burden of it; for it is a burden to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: God is ſaid to be weary with it, ſpeaking after the manner of men; "Ye have wearied me with your iniquities," Iſa. xliii. 24. It was a burden to Chriſt, *that made him* ſweat great drops of blood; it is a burden

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to the Holy Ghoſt, therefore called a vexing, grieving, and doing deſpite to him. What a burden will it be to men that die in it? And what a burden do the people of God find it? Nothing preſſes them down ſo much as this?

2. Sin is the ſtrongeſt ſting, the ſtrongeſt torment: it is the ſting of all ſtings, the ſting of ſorrow, the ſting of affliction, the ſting of deſertion, the ſting of death, as here in the context, *The ſting of death is ſin.* The pains of death are nothing to the ſting of death: the pain is tolerable, but the ſting is intolerable.

3. As it is the ſtrongeſt ſting, ſo it is the ſtrongeſt poiſon: if but a drop of that poiſon could poſſibly get into the nature of God, he would ceaſe to be, as I formerly noticed. What a mighty poiſon would it be, that if one drop of it were caſt into the ocean, it would poiſon the whole ocean? So it is here; and little wonder then, when ſome of this poiſon entered the human and angelical natures, it poiſoned them, and turned them to devils and monſters. There is no antidote againſt it, but the blood of Chriſt.

4. Sin is the ſtrongeſt plague and diſeaſe that ever was; you that know the plagues of your own hearts, will know this. Sin is the mother of all maladies and ſoul-diſeaſes, and is a compound of all. The worſt fever in the world is the inflamed luſts of the fleſh; the moſt dangerous tympany is the towering pride of the heart, and ſwelling of the vain mind; the moſt fearful flux is the bloody flux of ſin and corruption. O what divine power is requiſite for drying up this bloody iſſue! What dropſy is ſo deadly as that of drinking in iniquity as the ox drinketh water? What apoplexy and palſy is ſo direful as that by which people fall into miſchief, and hinders all ſpiritual breathing and motion! And what lethargy ſo lamentable as that of ſpiritual ſecurity and ſtupidity! The world is an hoſpital of diſeaſed ſouls. O if the Phyſician Jeſus Chriſt would come and heal!

5. Sin is the ſtrongeſt tyrant, and the moſt cruel. It hath a tyranny moſt lawleſs and intolerable. There is not any other oppreſſor but will give ſome reſt ſometimes, at leaſt to theſe that are under his ſlavery; as cruel Pha-

raoh gave the Iſraelites leave to refreſh themſelves with meat, and drink, and ſleep: but ſin gives no reſt to its miſerable captives and ſlaves; for, whether they eat, drink or ſleep, it always exacts of them the ſervice of ſin. Auguſtine ſpeaking of the tyranny of ſin, even over the people of God, "Many times, ſays he, ſin does that "when they are ſleeping, that it cannot do when they "are waking." And if ſin be ſo tyrannical towards the children of God, how great is its tyranny towards its ſlaves? Surely there is no peace to the wicked, no reſt for them. Satan put it in Judas's heart to betray Jeſus; and behold he would not let him reſt till he had performed that evil ſuggeſtion: the devil was ſo ſtrict with him, that he would not let him eat his meat, but haſtened him from the table to the treaſon. Thus Amnon, being incited by his own deviliſh luſts to defile his ſiſter Tamar, was ſo inwardly vexed, that his very fleſh wore away, and his mind had no reſt; he could not eat, or drink, or ſleep, till he had ſatisfied his luſt. What an intolerable tyrant is the man's inordinate affections, giving him no reſt day nor night! As it is ſaid of ſome, Prov. iv. 16. *They ſleep not, except they have done miſchief;* their ſleep is taken away, unleſs they cauſe ſome to fall.

6. Sin is the ſtrongeſt witchcraft; Gal. iii. 1. "O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, ſays the apoſtle, that you ſhould not obey the truth, before whoſe eyes Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth crucified among you?" People think it a terrible thing to hear that ſuch a body is bewitched or poſſeſt of the devil; but I muſt tell all you who will not receive the goſpel, you are bewitched; ſin hath bewitched you: and to be bodily poſſeſt with a legion of devils, is not ſo great a miſery, as to be under the power of one ſin. A man poſſeſt is an object of pity: thus Chriſt pitied the man whoſe name was Legion: but ſin makes a man the object of Chriſt's hatred. When God gave up Job's body to the devil, why did not the devil take poſſeſſion of him, ſays one of the fathers? "Why, "ſays he, becauſe, though he had taken poſſeſſion of "his body, and made him fret and tear himſelf, it had "not been his ſin, but his affliction: whereas, to bring "*him to ſin,* and curſe God, was the great thing he

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"ſought after." Therefore, to be given up to ſin, is a greater evil than to be poſſeſt. Ye that are parents, and have children whom you have cauſe to fear that they are given up to the power of ſin, know, it is worſe than if they were poſſeſt with the devil; therefore, ſuch ſhould come more earneſtly to Chriſt with their children, than theſe in the goſpel that brought to Chriſt their children poſſeſt with devils: they are worſe than bewitched.

7. Sin is the ſtrongeſt waſter. Oh! how mightily does ſin waſte you! Sin waſtes your ſoul and body; it waſtes your time, and waſtes your talents; it waſtes your opportunities, it waſtes your ſtrength, and waſtes your ſpirit, and all to no purpoſe. Oh! how many waſted Sabbaths, ſermons, waſted communions, waſted meals, and waſted mercies, all waſted and abuſed by ſin!

8. Sin is the ſtrongeſt death. Sin itſelf is ſpiritual death, and ſpiritual death is the moſt ſtrong and powerful death; inaſmuch as the ſoul is ſuperior to the body, ſo much is ſpiritual death more powerful and terrible than temporal or bodily death; and inſomuch as the cauſe is more conſiderable than the effect, ſo much is ſpiritual death more powerful and dreadful than eternal death: I mean, ſin is more dreadful than hell itſelf, as it is a place of torment; for, as the ſtrongeſt cord that draws people to hell is ſin; ſo the ſtrongeſt flame to torment the ſinner there, is ſin. The wrath of God would ceaſe, if ſin did not feed and increaſe it.—— Thus much of the ſtrength of ſin.

III. The third thing here propoſed was, To ſhow how the ſtrength of ſin diſcovers itſelf. Here I may ſhow you, 1. At what ſeaſons eſpecially does the ſtrength of ſin diſcover itſelf. 2. By what effects.

1ſt, At what ſeaſons more eſpecially does the ſtrength of ſin diſcover itſelf?

1. When men ſhould be moſt holy, ſin readily diſcovers itſelf to be moſt ſtrong. In the unregenerate, ſin is equally ſtrong at all times, but not equally evident. Some will ſay, Oh! my heart is never ſo ill as on the Sabbath-day: why, perhaps it is juſt the ſame thing at other times, *only the* ſtrength of it may be more evident

dent then. In the regenerate, ſin is ſometimes ſtronger, ſometimes weaker; but ordinarily it diſcovers its ſtrength moſt when they would moſt gladly be quit of it; "When I would do good, evil is preſent with me," Rom. vii. 21. It is in this caſe many times, as with the children of theſe that obſerve the worſhip of God daily in their families, they find the children moſt fretful and ill-natured in time of worſhip, when they ought to be beſt. Perhaps it may be ſo, indeed; and the tempter may have a hand in it for diſturbing the worſhip of God: but, for ordinary, it is not then that they are worſt, but then they are moſt noticed.

2. Sin diſcovers its ſtrength moſt, when a heart-change comes to be ſought after. It is eaſy to wear Chriſt's livery for a while, by a fair profeſſion; but when he comes to ſeek the heart, there is no hearing on that ſide of the head. People may ſoon be induced to give ſome compliment to Chriſt, to give him the outward man, to give him the hand: but to give him the heart, is another matter; for, when it comes to that, the ſtrength of ſin appears. And then,

3. When a darling luſt is demanded, then the ſtrength of ſin appears; for the man will quit any thing for Chriſt but that. Naaman will part with any thing ſave a bow in the houſe of Rimmon: the young man in the goſpel will hold on with Chriſt, till Chriſt touch him on the ſore, and ſtrike upon his covetouſneſs; then he goes away ſorrowful.

4. When long cuſtom hath taken place, then the ſtrength of ſin appears; for, *Can the Ethiopian change his colour, or the leopard his ſpots? No more can ye that are accuſtomed to do evil, learn to do well.* It is hard, yea, extremely difficult to pull up an old tree by the roots.

5. When a time of ſpiritual drouſineſs takes place, then the ſtrength of ſin diſcovers itſelf. Take the heart while awake, and it can then pray, and wait, and praiſe, and worſhip: but let drouſineſs come on, it cannot watch with Chriſt one hour, for all his intreaty; for then the eyes are heavy; then is the hour and power of darkneſs. When the believer is waking and watchful, believing and holy, then the power of God appears; it

is the hour of God's power: but when ſpiritual drouſineſs comes on, then the power of ſin appears; the ſoul cannot ſtir hand nor foot.

6. When a time of temptation comes, then the ſtrength of ſin appears. The perſon will be very meek, very modeſt, very chaſte, very moderate, very devout, and very innocent like, when there is no temptation, no opportunity for ſin's working; and at ſuch a time ſin will be very ſilent, very quiet, very ſtill, and faſt aſleep: but let a ſtrong temptation, and a ſtrong luſt meet together, then the ſtrength of ſin ſtirs up itſelf. Sin is like a thief, who would ſeem to be a very honeſt man till a fit opportunity come, and then his hand falls to. "It is, as one ſays, like the ſpider, that never appears "out of her hole till the flie be intangled in her net; "then ſhe appears, and deſtroys the poor creature, and "carries it along with her." When temptation is at a diſtance, perhaps, you hope you will withſtand it; you pray, and promiſe, and what not? and ſin lets you be ſaying, and never a word from it, till the new temptation comes, and then it appears with new ſtrength.

7. When a time of trial and temptation comes, ſin diſcovers its power. It may be, you can preach patience and ſubmiſſion to others in affliction; but when it comes to your own door, then you will find the heart rebelling againſt the providence, and that it is eaſier to give an advice than to take it. The power of enmity falls a working, as againſt the preceptive, ſo againſt the providential will of God.

8. When difficult duties are preſſed, then the ſtrength of ſin appears.—When duties croſs to fleſh and blood, croſs to ſelf and ſelf-righteouſneſs are preſſed, what! muſt I reprove even my ſuperiors and great ones when they err? This ſays ſin, will expoſe you to their wrath and indignation. Muſt I profeſs Chriſt, even before a wicked company? Nay ſays ſin, this will expoſe you to ſhame and reproach. Muſt I bear with injuries and affronts? Nay, ſays ſin, fleſh and blood cannot bear with that. Muſt I deny myſelf, and all my beſt duties and righteouſneſs? Nay, ſays ſin, this is a hard ſaying, who can bear it? May I not hope that my duties will profit me as to my

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acceptance and juſtification before God? No, no; the heart caſts out with God, and ſin ſhows its ſtrength in theſe caſes.—Again, in a time when all diligence in duty is required, as well as deniedneſs thereunto; and when the law is urged to be regarded as a rule of obedience, as well as renounced as a rule of acceptance: What! to be ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; to make religion the conſtant trade; to be holy in duties, and holy in the intervals of duties: the ſtrength of ſin here appears in its mighty oppoſition to this kind of life. A man will be content to pray, and hear, and read, and ſing, if he may be allowed a latitude when he is done; but to be always praying, always watching, and always waiting on the Lord, the carnal heart reſiſts this like death: it may be reſtrained a while, like a ſtream that is dammed up for a time; but it breaks out with greater violence at laſt.

9. When the commandment comes powerfully, ſin revives, and diſcovers its power, Rom. vii. 9. The ſpirituality of the law, wakens up the malignity of ſin.

10. In a time when goſpel-light ſhines moſt clearly, then the ſtrength of ſin appears moſt evidently. The law of works, and legal doctrine may be preached, and yet the ſtrength of ſin never touched, never truly diſcovered; yea, the legal heart may fall in with the legal ſtrain, and comply with all the legal duties and means of life, and yet the ſtrength of ſin more and more increaſed, though hidden under a legal covert; for, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law;* and therefore ſin does not differ with the law as it is a covenant of works: But, let the goſpel-light ſhine clearly, then ſin will diſcover itſelf more evidently, and rage more deſperately, unleſs it be conquered by goſpel-grace. Why, becauſe though the law of works, or the works of the law and the power of ſin, are no oppoſites, but friends that live and die together; yet the goſpel of grace, and the power of ſin, are direct oppoſites: for nothing in the world can deſtroy the power of ſin, but the graces of the goſpel; and therefore the ſtrength of ſin reſiſts the grace of the goſpel with main force. Goſpel-grace ſeeks no leſs than *the very life of* ſin; therefore ſin muſt now fight for its *life.* *Wonder not* that the world oppoſes the goſpel ſo

much, in conjunction with the god of this world, who blinds the minds of them that believe not, &c. Neither wonder if ſin appear very ſtrong, where the goſpel ſhines very clear; or if there be the greateſt oppoſition, where there is the cleareſt light. Men naturally underſtand ſomething of the law, that ſays, *Do, and live;* work, and get your wages: and this natural underſtanding is what men pride themſelves in, ſo as in the pride of their heart they reject the goſpel, which is wholly ſupernatural and divine, and wherein Chriſt is ſet up as the only Potentate that can demoliſh the ſtrength of ſin, by executing his ſaving offices in us. But, behold, pride of wiſdom oppoſes him as a Prophet, and ſo man's folly is increaſed; pride of righteouſneſs oppoſes him in his prieſtly office, and ſo the guilt of ſin is increaſed; pride of ſtrength oppoſes him as to his kingly office, and ſo the power of ſin is increaſed: and thus, through an evil heart of unbelief, they depart from the living God. The goſpel ſets up Chriſt againſt the ſtrength of ſin, and therefore the ſtrength of ſin appears in arms againſt the goſpel.—Thus you ſee at what ſeaſons, and on what occaſion, eſpecially, the ſtrength of ſin appears.

2*dly*, By what effects does the ſtrength of ſin diſcover itſelf? I am not here to run through all the ſad effects of ſin: otherwiſe I might ſhow how it brought angels out of heaven, and Adam out of Paradiſe; how it brought fire and brimſtone upon Sodom, and a deluge of water on the old world; and what confuſion, calamity, and miſery it hath brought into the world; what temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal judgments it brings on: theſe are common topics, and too large a field for me now to inſiſt upon; therefore I confine myſelf to that effect of ſin that the text and context leads me to. Know then, that the ſtrength of ſin appears in the STING of it, and the ſting of death is ſin: there is the great diſcovery that the ſtrength of ſin makes of itſelf.

And there are two deaths I would here ſpeak a little of, as the greateſt diſcoveries of the ſtrength of ſin, namely, 1. The death of the ſinner. 2. The death of the Saviour. Both theſe deaths diſcover the powerful ſting *and mighty ſtrength* of ſin.

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[1.] The death of the ſinner diſcovers the ſtrength of ſin; for, *The wages of ſin is death.* And here, firſt, Sinning angels were ſtung to death by their ſin; and hence we are told, Jude 6. "That the angels that kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, are reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day." And next, ſinning man was ſtung to death; *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned,* Rom. v. 12. The death of the ſinner, whereof death is the ſting and ſtrength, is threefold, namely, external, internal, and eternal: external relates to the body, internal relates to the ſoul, and eternal relates to the ſoul and body for ever.—Death external, or of the body and outward man, includes not only the ſeparation of ſoul and body, to the privation of bodily life; but alſo all the pains and ſickneſs, public calamities, perſonal miſeries, and grievous diſeaſes that do attend a preſent life, or are the forerunners and attendants of death: all which are parts of this ſting and ſtrength of ſin.—Death internal, includes ſoul-defilement and pollution; ſoul-debaſement and degradation to the rank of beaſts; ſoul-diſturbance, diſorder, and confuſion; ſoul-ſeparation from God, and alienation from the life of God; the life of God being gone, and the candle of the Lord put out, ſo as nothing remains but the darkneſs of death and hell. Oh! how great a loſs is the loſs of God, the loſs of his favour, his image, his fellowſhip, and ſweet communion with him! All the life of the carnal man, who is but dead while he lives, is at beſt (inſtead of righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, which are part of the ſpiritual life) nothing but a little while's eating, and drinking, and playing, and laughing, and living in filthineſs, and enjoying no better pleaſure than brute beaſts; but ſo much the worſe, that, having an immortal ſoul, the iſſue is terrible, nothing remaining but torment and terror of mind and conſcience whenever it begins to awaken.—Death eternal, includes everlaſting ſeparation from the preſence of God: indeed, the former deaths were not ſo terrible *to the ſinner,* if there were not two ſad words and ſadder

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things following thereupon, namely, judgment and eternity, that tread upon the heels of death; for, whenever the ſoul is ſeparate from the body, it muſt ſee the things it would never believe, nor ſeriouſly think upon, that verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth; and that, dying in ſin, and out of Chriſt, it muſt receive from that juſt Judge a ſentence of excommunication from the glorious and joyful preſence of God, and that for ever and ever; beſides the ſuffering of everlaſting torment, as the due demerit of ſin.——Thus, in the death of the ſinner, the ſtrength of ſin is diſcovered. But more eſpecially,

[2.] The death of the Saviour ſhews forth the ſtrength of ſin above all other things; for ſin was the cauſe of it, and the very ſting by which he ſuffered unto death. Every life, whether it be the life of beaſt, the life of men, the life of angels, or the life of God, hath an excellency according to its kind; and the more excellent the life is, the more powerful, terrible, and hurtful is the cauſe of the privation thereof. "The life of a flie, "ſays Auguſtine, is more excellent than the ſun; be- "cauſe the ſun, though an excellent creature, hath "not life; but the flie, though little, yet it hath life: "it ſhows the excellency of God to make ſuch a living "creature." But if the life of a beaſt, or inſect, be ſo excellent, how much more the life of a man! And if the life of a man, or an angel, be excellent, what infinite excellency is there in the life of God! Now, the principal excellency of the life of man lay at firſt in this, that he was in the image of God; and how terrible is that ſting of ſin, that could deprive man of that excellent life, ſo as to ſtrike at God's image in man, both to deface and deſtroy it! But if ſin ſtrike at God himſelf, and aim at the higheſt life, even the life of God; and if the ſtroak reach ſo far, as to kill and take away the life of that perſon who was God as well as man; then we may ſee and conclude, that the ſtrength of ſin is inconceivably more great and terrible than it can be ſeen to be in any other glaſs. But ſo it is, though God cannot die, and though the divine nature of Chriſt could not be touched *with the* ſting, yet he, who was God-man

in one perſon, was preſſed down to death with the ſtrength, and wounded even to death with the ſting of ſin. And this one thing makes a greater diſcovery of the ſtrength of ſin, than all the torments of the damned to eternity can do. In the red glaſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt you may ſee more of the power and ſtrength of ſin, than if God ſhould let you down to hell, and make you ſee all the tortures and torments of the damned. In order, therefore, to your having a clearer inſight into the ſtrength of ſin, O Sirs, look to a crucified Chriſt: look upon his agony and croſs, when he was wounded for our ſin. O ſee the ſting of ſin, and the ſtrength of it, when it made the Son of God to ſay, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death*, Mat. xxvi. 38. There the ſting was ſticking in his ſoul, while he was under the apprehenſion of God's wrath, and was about to bear the wrath that ſin deſerved. Perhaps, upon the ſight of ſin, you content yourſelf with ſome little ſlight ſorrow, ſaying, I am ſorry for it; Lord have mercy on me; and ſo it paſſes away: but when the weight of ſin was lying on Chriſt's back, it made his ſoul ſorrowful, compaſſed about with ſorrow, and ſorrowful even unto death, and that for our ſins. See the ſtrength of ſin in the ſufferings of Chriſt, expreſſed alſo in that word, Mark xiv. 33. *He began to be ſore amazed, and to be very heavy:* amazed at the dreadfulneſs of that cup of wrath for ſin, which he, as Surety, behoved to drink. He knew very well, and underſtood perfectly, what that wrath of God was; and this made him ſtand amazed. Many hear of God's wrath, but are never amazed at it, never affected with it, as all Chriſtleſs ſinners ought to be: but, alas! they do not underſtand it, they do not know what it is for a creature to ſtand before the wrath of an infinite Deity; they know not the power of his wrath, therefore they are not amazed. Chriſt ſaw to the bottom of that cup, and to the dregs thereof; and when he was to drink it, he ſtood amazed: how great then is the ſtrength of ſin, that procured this amazement of the Son of God!—See again the ſtrength of ſin in Chriſt's ſufferings for it, while it is ſaid, he was in an agony, Luke xxii. 44.; *that is, as it were,* in a COMBAT; in combat with the infinite

infinite juſtice and wrath of God, and with the dreadful threatenings and curſe of the law, that ſin brought upon him, when he ſtood our Surety. How great is the ſtrength of ſin, that put the Son of God, the Strength of Iſrael, the Captain of ſalvation, into ſuch an agony! —Again, it is ſaid, Mark xiv. 35. that he fell down to the ground; and Mat. xxvi. 39. that he fell on his face: Alas! Sirs, when he, that upholds the heavens and the earth by his power, fell grovelling on the earth, when the weight and burden of ſin was upon him; how ſtrong muſt ſin be! Chriſt fell upon his face, and fell to the ground; ſurely that weight, that made Chriſt fall to the ground, would have preſſed all the angels of heaven, and men on earth to the bottomleſs gulf of deſpair. If all the ſtrength of all the men that ever were from the beginning of the world, and of all the angels in heaven were put into one, and that perſon had the weight upon him that Chriſt had, it would make him ſink to the loweſt hell, and ly there for ever. If Chriſt had not been God, as well as man, he could never have borne it, but would have ſunk down eternally: but though he was God as well as man, yet ſuch was the ſtrength of ſin, that under its burden he ſunk down to the ground.—Again, the ſtrength of it appears, in that it made him to ſweat great drops of blood, Luke xxiii. 44. The word ſignifies GREAT CLOTS of blood; blood thickened into clots. Never was there ſuch a ſweat, and that upon the cold ground, in a cold winter-night, and nothing elſe upon him to make him ſweat but the burden of ſin, and the weight of wrath that it brought upon him.—But again, how does the ſtrength of ſin appear, in his crying under this weight, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me?* And thus he cried three times. Why, this was the very end for which he came to the world, to drink that cup; and he knew that the ſalvation of an elect world of poor ſinners depended upon his drinking of it: and, was he now unwilling? No, by no means: but knowing the dreadfulneſs of it, when it was put to his head, he put it away, as it were, ſaying, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me: but now* he ſees, if he drink it not, all

the children of men muſt eternally periſh; therefore, he put it to his mouth again the ſecond time; but knowing the dreadfulneſs of it, he takes it away again, and cries, "Father, if it be poſſible, let it paſs away from me." But, becauſe he could not ſee ſo many thouſands of poor ſinners periſh eternally, he put it to his mouth again, the third time; and yet, beholding the dreadfulneſs of it, he put it away again, ſaying, "Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs." But, after all, his infinite love overcame his dreadful amazement; and away he goes to the croſs, to drink that bitter cup of vengeance to the bottom: and while he was drinking it, he cries out with a more bitter cry than ever, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* This was ſuch a cry from the Son of God, the Son of his eternal love, that heaven was not able to bear it without bluſhing, nor the earth to bear it without trembling: therefore, as the ſun withdrew his light, and became dark and black at the ſight; ſo the earth ſhook, the rocks clave, and the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. Mean time, the ſting went to his heart, and ſtabbed him to death; and all this was done, that the ſting of death, which is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin, which is the law, might be vanquiſhed by him, and that poor ſinners might be victorious through him.

However, the more we view here the ſtrength of ſin, the more ſweet will be the ſong of victory. Dwell a little further upon this then: Chriſt is the Strength of Iſrael; but never was the Strength of Iſrael tried ſo much as by the ſtrength of ſin, when he had that to deal with, and when by the ſin of man he was made a curſe, Gal. iii. 13. What made the death and ſufferings of Chriſt ſo dreadful to him, even before he ſuffered? Let me aſk here four queſtions.

1. Did not Chriſt perfectly know all that he was to ſuffer, long before he ſuffered? What made it then ſo dreadful when he expected it? Had he any ſin of his own, to weaken him, or take away his ſtrength? No; he had none, but by imputation. Had he any impatience? No; his patience was abſolutely perfect. What then was the matter? Weakneſs of patience makes us

cry;

cry; but Chriſt cried not from want of the ſtrength of patience, but from the feeling of the ſtrength of ſin, the whole power and force of the fiery law.

2. Was not Chriſt the Captain of all that were to ſuffer afterwards? How came the martyrs to ſuffer with joy, and yet the Captain to fall to the ground, and cry out of exceeding ſorrow? Was it not thro' the ſtrength of Chriſt, that all that ever did ſuffer, were enabled to ſuffer for his name what they did? Yea, but the matter was, he had ſome other thing to ſuffer than they had; he had even the wrath of God, and the ſtrength of ſin to grapple with, which they had nothing to do with, he having thus taken it away.

3. Did not Chriſt know what infinite good his ſuffering would do, that he was to ſave ſo many thouſands of thouſands of ſinners, and that thus he was to reconcile God and man to glorify his Father, and to do the greateſt work for God that ever was done, and to bring in a tribute of eternal praiſe from men and angels? And did he not know, that though his ſufferings were extreme, yet they were to laſt but a few hours, and then he was to be glorified? Why then was his ſuffering ſo dreadful to him? Why, becauſe then the whole ſtrength of ſin was preſſing him, the whole ſtrength of a broken law.

4. Had not Chriſt the ſtrength of an infinite Deity to ſupport him? the divine nature to ſupport the human? Was there not a perſonal union betwixt the divine and human nature at that time? Was he not God-man in one perſon? Yea, why then was his ſuffering ſo dreadful to him? Why, the ſtrength of ſin lighted on him with its whole weight, and the ſtrength of ſin brought on him the ſtrength of the law, the ſtrength of the broken law brought on him the ſtrength of offended juſtice, the ſtrength of infinite juſtice, brought on him the ſtrength of infinite wrath and vengeance for ſin; and therefore, though his ſtrength was the ſtrength of God, he behoved to cry and roar, and die under the ſtrength of ſin.

O my dear friends, you cannot conceive how infinite wiſdom, though inventing a way from all eternity, to

diſcover the ſtrength and dreadfulneſs of ſin, could do it ſo much to the life, as it is diſcovered in the death and ſufferings of the Son of God. If ever you ſee the evil and ſtrength of ſin here, you will ſee it to be ſin indeed.

IV. The Fourth head propoſed was, to ſhow whence the ſtrength of ſin comes, and where it lies. I ſhall very ſhortly ſpeak to this, in theſe four particulars.

1. As the ſtrength of a tree lies in the root of it, and the ſtrength of the water lies in the fountain; ſo the ſtrength of ſin lies in the root and fountain of ſin, *viz.* The original violation of the covenant of works, by our firſt parents; the righteous imputation of that guilt unto us; and the total depravation of our nature, iſſuing from thence, and called, *A body of ſin and death.* Hence, no leſs power can deſtroy the ſtrength of ſin, than that power that can pull up the root, and dry up the fountain of ſin.

2. As the ſtrength of an army lies much in their general; ſo the ſtrength of ſin and luſts lies in their commander the devil. I ſaid before, that ſin is ſtronger than the devil; and yet the devil may be ſaid to be the ſtrength of ſin, as a general or commander is the ſtrength of an army; for, though the army may be ſtronger than the general that commands it, yet his ſkill and management may be the principal cauſe of their victorious power, while his leading and directing them gives them great advantage againſt their enemies. Thus the devil is the commander in ſin's army, and the great quarter-maſter that fills the ſinner's heart, as it is ſaid of Ananias, Acts v. 3. "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lye to the Holy Ghoſt?" It is the devil that fills the hearts of people to lye, and drink, and ſwear, and do other acts of wickedneſs; for, he rules in the children of diſobedience, Eph. ii. 2. and the god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not; and ſo holds them under the ſtrength of ſin, in chains of darkneſs and ignorance. No leſs power, then, can ſubdue the ſtrength of ſin, than that power that can deſtroy the devil and *his works.*

3. As

3. As the ſtrength of Samſon lay in his locks, and the ſtrength of a ſociety lies in their unity, or the ſtrength of a company lies in their conjunction; ſo the ſtrength of ſin lies in its union with the ſinner, and in its conjunction with and relation to him: the ſtrength of ſinful luſts lies in their oneneſs with, and relation to ourſelves. And for a man to deſtroy his luſts, is to deny himſelf: they are ſuch a part of a man's ſelf, that they ſeem to be the beſt part, and the moſt powerful part of himſelf; his right-hand, his right-eye, his moſt uſeful and powerful members; *Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth*, Col. iii. 5. The power then that can deſtroy the power and ſtrength of ſin, is ſuch as can pull down ſelf, and all the members of it, and divide one member from another. The power that is neceſſary for deſtroying ſin, is that divine power that can divide and ſeparate a man from himſelf, and even deſtroy nature itſelf by a new creation.

4. As the ſtrength of a kingdom lies in the conſtitution and government thereof; ſo the ſtrength of ſin lies in the law of works: *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.* Now, to ſhew how the law is the ſtrength of ſin, is the ſubject of the next doctrine, which I deſign to treat of afterwards. In a word, as the command of the law irritates ſin, and gives it a commanding power over the ſinner; and as the threatening of the law curſes ſin, and gives it a condemning power over the ſinner; ſo the power alone that can bring down the ſtrength of ſin, muſt be ſuch as can give full ſatisfaction both to the precept and penalty of the law of works. And whereas ſin draws its commanding ſtrength from the violated precept, and its condemning ſtrength from the incurred ſanction of the law, and yet the precept of the law derives its ſtrength from the holineſs of God, and the ſanction of the law derives its ſtrength from the juſtice of God; therefore, the power that can vanquiſh ſin, muſt be ſuch as can give infinite holineſs all the obedience it commands in the precept, and infinite juſtice all the ſatisfaction it demands in the threatening of the law: conſequently no man is freed from the power, ſtrength, and dominion

of ſin, till he be unbottomed from the law as a covenant of works, united to Chriſt the ſecond Adam, and inveſted with his everlaſting law-biding righteouſneſs.

V. The fifth thing propoſed, was, to make ſome application of this doctrine. Is it ſo, that ſin is ſuch a ſtrong and powerful thing as I have ſhown? Then hence we may learn,

1. That it is no eaſy matter to be delivered from the power and ſtrength of ſin. Let Arminians magnify the power of man's nature and free-will as they pleaſe; yet let us hence ſee the need of the power of God, and magnify the power of ſovereign grace. If any man think ſo proudly of himſelf, that he can, at his own will and pleaſure, deliver himſelf from the bondage of corruption, he is both ignorant of the ſtrength of ſin, declaring himſelf to be under the power of it, and running on in the way to his own eternal ruin; yea, by ſuch a conceit as this, ſin gathers more and more ſtrength, and holds ſinners ſo much the faſter under its power; for thus they are hardened in a continuance in that courſe which they fancy they can reform when they will; and hence, though their time of returning to God is always, even when they will; yet that time never comes. To will is preſent with a child of God many times, Rom. vii. 18. when he finds an oppoſing power of ſin withſtanding him: but a preſent will to come to Chriſt, and forſake all ſin, is never preſent with a natural man. A future will he may have, thinking that after ſuch or ſuch a time he will repent, and reform, and come to Chriſt; but that future will is a preſent nill and denial. The ſtrength of ſin remains in the will, and will remain there, unleſs a day of power come to make him willing.

2. If ſin hath ſuch a ſtrength, then ſee the miſerable thraldom of Chriſtleſs ſinners; they are ſlaves to the baſeſt maſter in the world, namely, ſin: and if they live and die in that ſlavery, they are to have the fearfulleſt wages, and that is death. As nothing is more baſe than ſin, ſo nothing is more bitter than death. You have heard of the miſery of galley-ſlaves among the Turks, who uſe to chain

them

them to their ſeats, and ſcourge them cruelly with rods; how ſweet is it to be delivered from ſuch bondage! But, alas! what is a Turk to a devil? What is the labour of oars to the ſervice of ſin, and the torments of hell?

3. If ſin hath ſuch a ſtrength, then ſee the neceſſity of regeneration, and the power of grace to break the power of ſin. It was the ſpeech of one to a ſkilful philoſopher, that upon the calculation of his nativity, had foretold him ſome ſpecialities concerning his future ſtate: he anſwered in this manner, "Such, perhaps, I was born "at firſt; but, ſince that time, I have been born again; "and my ſecond nativity hath croſt my firſt." Some will excuſe their ſin from their birth, and excuſe their wickedneſs by their natural inclination, ſaying, I am born choleric, I am born covetous, I am born amorous, or born thus and thus vicious: why, indeed the power of nature is a plauſible plea for theſe that acknowledge no power above nature; but for a profeſſed Chriſtian to excuſe his ſin from his nature; is an apology worſe than the fault; for, wherefore ſerves the power of godlineſs, but to ſubdue the power of ſin, and to govern nature? We are ſo far Chriſtians, indeed, as we have the power and government over ourſelves by the power of regenerating grace; and religion, without this, is nothing but form and ſpeculation.

4. If ſin be ſo ſtrong, then converſion is a miracle, an inward miracle. Outward miracles cannot convert a man, where there is no inward power accompanying them. Ten miraculous plagues could not convert Pharaoh; the thunder, and hail, and frogs, and flies, and lice, and locuſts, were deſtroying the land of Egypt; but could not deſtroy Pharaoh's pride and obſtinacy: nor could all the miracles that Chriſt wrought, deſtroy the Phariſees pride and infidelity. And do we not daily ſee, from ſad experience, how the ſtrength of ſin makes men break through the thouſands of means, that might be thought would be effectual to converſion, ſuch as vows, promiſes, mercies, croſſes, ſickneſs, convictions, terrors, ſermons, warnings, challenges; yea, and break

through them all into hell? It is ſome internal miracle only that will do the buſineſs; and, indeed, the ſtrength of God is in nothing more known, than in ſubduing the ſtrength of ſin, which requires the exceeding greatneſs of his power, Eph. i. 19. even the power of his power. Hence believers are ſaid to be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; that is, in the power of his power, the very quinteſſence of power. Was it a miracle for God to make a world out of nothing? It is yet a greater miracle for him to make a ſaint out of a ſinner, that was under the power and ſtrength of ſin. Indeed, miracles are not ceaſed, ſo long as there are any converts in the world.

5. If ſin be ſo ſtrong and powerful, then ſee the happineſs of believers in Chriſt, that are delivered from the ſting of death, and the ſtrength of ſin. The leaſt branch of that vine that is in Chriſt, is too high for Satan's reach; yea, while there is ſap in the root, they ſhall not want it: they will not want the Spirit, that, thro' the Spirit, they may mortify the deeds of the body. There is a power in Chriſt, which will bring down every contrary power, and diſanul the law of ſin. Chriſt hath ſo handled that ſnake, by taking out the ſting and teeth of it, that, though it hiſs, it cannot hurt. Though ſin be not killed out-right in the children of God while here, yet it is ſo maimed and ſo weakened, that, like the proud king Adonibezek, when once his hands and toes were mangled, and he faſt in chains, he could not endanger Iſrael in any thing; ſo neither can ſin or Satan with reſpect to the children of God: "The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under their feet ſhortly." Strong is the devil, but ſtronger is the Captain of their ſalvation; great is the power of ſin, but greater is the power of Chriſt, whoſe ſtrength will be perfected in their weakneſs.

6. If ſin be ſtrong, then ſee to whom ſalvation from ſin is to be aſcribed, and in whom it is to be ſought, namely, Chriſt the valiant conqueror. It is ſo mighty and ſo glorious a work to defeat his ſtrength, that our glorious Lord thought it not unbeſeeming omnipotency to meddle with it: *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thy help.* Our perdition is of ourſelves;

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but our ſalvation belongs to the Lord, and to the Lamb that ſits upon the throne. No part of the glory of this work muſt be aſcribed to any elſe: "His glory will he not give to another." The believer's ſong, therefore, will be, as in the context, "Thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory, through Jeſus Chriſt:" Not by our own righteouſneſs or our own ſtrength; nay, "In the Lord only have we righteouſneſs and ſtrength: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, ſaith the Lord of hoſts." And hence,

7. If the ſtrength of ſin be ſo great, then, how great is the ſtrength of grace that can conquer ſin! "By grace we are ſaved, from the power of ſin, through faith, and that not of ourſelves, it is the gift of God; not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt." It is the ſin-pardoning grace, the ſin-ſubduing grace, the free mercy of God in Chriſt, offered to ſinners in the goſpel, that is mighty, through God, to the deſtroying of the power of ſin. All hearers of the goſpel that are not believers, are impenitent ſinners: and they that will venture to ſay, that it is an affront to God, to offer pardon to the impenitent, they know not what they ſay; for it is by offers of pardoning grace and mercy to impenitent hard-hearted ſinners, that God breaks their heart, and deſtroys the ſtrength of their ſin and impenitency: "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Why, what influences ſuch a ſinner to turn and repent? Even the offer of pardoning mercy; "For our God will abundantly pardon," Iſa. lv. 7. He will multiply to pardon. O Sirs! when the impenitent ſinner gets an ear to hear ſuch an offer as this, that God will multiply pardons even upon one that hath multiplied tranſgreſſions, this goodneſs of God leads him to repentance, and melts his heart. If any thing in the world break the ſtrength of ſin, it will be the ſtrength of grace, and of God's love and mercy, through Chriſt, held out in the goſpel.

8. If the ſtrength of ſin be ſo great, then hence I infer, that there can be no goſpel-repentance before faith: No repentance, or turning from ſin to God, till a man come

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to Chriſt for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, againſt the ſtrength of ſin. It is another piece of the new and odd divinity of ſome in our day, that goſpel-repentance, or ſome acts of it, are before ſaving faith: but this doctrine of the ſtrength of ſin declares the contrary; for, when true goſpel-repentance takes place, then the ſtrength of ſin is broken, and the man is actually in arms againſt it. But where got he his armour, if he never came to Chriſt by faith for ſtrength? Repentance is a turning to God; but, who ever turned to God, without taking Chriſt by the way? For no man comes to the Father but by him. Much hypocritical, and feigned, and legal repentance there may be without faith; but, true, actual, goſpel-repentance is always the fruit both of Chriſt's look to the ſoul, as he did to Peter, whereupon he goes out and weeps bitterly; and alſo of faith looking to Chriſt; "They ſhall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn." And this, by the bye, may ſerve to gloſs ſeveral abuſed texts of ſcripture, where repentance is firſt named before faith, which never import that true goſpel-repentance is before faith; but only, as we may firſt ſpeak of the end, and then of the means to accompliſh that end; ſo repentance may be the firſt named, which is the end, even turning to God; and then faith comes in, as the mean to that end. Thus, *Repent, and believe the goſpel,* there is the end; repent and turn to a right mind, by turning to God: Why, he muſt even come to Chriſt by believing the goſpel, otherwiſe he will never repent ſo as to turn unto God: thus we read of repentance towards God, and then faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; where, tho' repentance towards God, be firſt named, yet, faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, without which there is no coming to God, is firſt acted. If I ſhould ſay, Go up to heaven, and climb the ladder; though going up to heaven is firſt named, yet the mean of this, though laſt named, muſt be firſt uſed; for, who will ever win up to heaven, unleſs they get up by the true Jacob's ladder, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? In a word, the ſtrength of Chriſt muſt be improved by faith, and ſet againſt the ſtrength of ſin; otherwiſe no part of its ſtrength is in the leaſt broken.

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9. If the ſtrength of ſin be ſo great, then, hence I infer, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the great and eternal God, becauſe he alone could deſtroy the ſtrength of ſin, and through him alone we can have complete victory over it. Oh! curſed Arianiſm! that would diminiſh our only ſtrength, by denying the ſupreme Deity of our Lord Jeſus. If he had not been true God, eſſentially one with the Father, as well as perſonally equal to him, when the ſtrength of ſin and the whole power of it was laid upon him, it would have deſtroyed him. The power of ſin, which ſtrikes againſt an infinite Majeſty, brought the power of infinite vengeance upon him, which would have ruined him to eternity, if he had not been God; but, becauſe he was the infinite and eternal God, he was able, by his death in the fleſh, to condemn ſin in the fleſh, Rom. viii. 3.; and ſo to deſtroy the ſtrength of ſin. And hence,

10. If the ſtrength of ſin be ſo great, ſee the duty of poor ſinners, that are captives to the power of ſin, *viz.* to look to him who is the Strength of Iſrael, that they may be ſaved from the ſtrength of ſin; Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe." None elſe can ſave from the ſtrength of ſin: ſet the ſtrength of angels againſt it, it will be too hard for them; the ſtrength of means and ordinances, the ſtrength of miniſters and ſermons, the ſtrength of duties and prayers will not do of themſelves. I have already ſhewed that ſin is ſtronger than all theſe; but here is a ſtrength that is able to ſave to the uttermoſt from it, even the ſtrength of Chriſt; therefore, *Let him take hold of my ſtrength*, Iſa. xxvi. 3. But, ſay you, why deſire you one, that is under the ſtrength of ſin, to lay hold on the ſtrength of Chriſt? The ſtrength of ſin weakens me, ſo that I have no ability to lay hold on his ſtrength. It is true, you have no ſtrength, nor ever will have ſtrength in yourſelf, or power in your own hand, while you are in this broken ſtate; but as you are called to lay hold on his ſtrength, ſo you are called to go out of yourſelf, for ſtrength to lay hold on his ſtrength: if you had ſtrength in yourſelf to lay hold on

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him by faith, Chriſt would never be preſented to you as the author of faith, as well as the object of it. Therefore, when you are called to believe, you are not called to bring ſtrength out of yourſelf for that end, but to ſay, with your ſoul, Oh! I have neither righteouſneſs nor ſtrength; but, "Surely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength." And tho' it be almighty power alone that can make you ſay that with the heart, and believingly; yet, while you cannot ſay it, though God be offering Chriſt to you for your righteouſneſs and ſtrength, you are ſaying, in effect, It is a lye that God ſays; I cannot believe it; he is not offering any ſuch thing to me; I cannot take it to me; I cannot truſt his word for it: and ſo, by unbelief, you make him a liar.

Oh! Sirs, caſt yourſelves on the Lord Jeſus, for ſalvation from ſin, and from all your ſins, and from the ſtrength of all your luſts; for he is freely offering himſelf and all his grace to you, ſaying, "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Why, what means this, *Ho, every one?* Why it is even as Chriſt ſhould ſay, *Ho*, every guilty perſon, come to me for pardon; *Ho*, every filthy ſinner, come to me for cleanſing; my blood only cleanſeth from all ſin; *Ho*, every naked ſinner, come to me for a robe of righteouſneſs to cover you; *Ho*, every needy ſinner, come to me for ſupply out of my infinite fulneſs; *Ho*, every faithleſs, unbelieving ſinner, come to me, as the author of faith, that I may give you faith, and help your unbelief, and then increaſe your faith; *Ho*, every impenitent ſinner, hard-hearted ſinner, come to me, as to a Prince exalted by the right-hand of God, to give repentance, and to give you the heart of fleſh promiſed in the covenant; *Ho*, every great ſinner, come to me for the great ſalvation from your great ſins, and from God's great wrath; *Ho*, every graceleſs ſinner, come to me for grace and glory, and eternal life. Why will you not come to me, that you might have life? To come to Chriſt for life, ſuppoſes death; and, how can the dead come to him for life? Why, it *is his call,* who is the Lord of life, and can make the dead

dead to hear and live; therefore, *Ho*, every powerleſs ſinner, in whom the ſtrength of ſin and luſts is ſtronger than hell and the devil, come to me for ſtrength, and look to me for ſtrength; "For I am God, and there is none elſe." None elſe but the mighty God can ſave from the might of ſin, which, if he ſave you not, is mighty to defile you, and mighty to deſtroy you. But, what is the Mediator's name? His name is, *Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God;* and never did he appear more mighty than in deſtroying mighty luſts, and ſubduing the ſtrength of ſin: all the ſtrength of men and angels could have done no more againſt ſin, or the wrath of God that it brought on, than if you ſhould ſet a piece of paper againſt a mighty flame. Such is the wrong that ſin hath done to God, that all the created power of heaven and earth coming in betwixt God and man, to ſatisfy for that wrong, had been but like a piece of dry thin paper, betwixt you and a mighty devouring flame. But, behold, Chriſt, who undertook to remove the ſtrength of ſin, and the power of wrath that it entails, is the mighty God, the infinite God, able to expiate that infinite wrong that ſin had done to God: and as he hath diſcovered his ability, by pouring out his blood to ſave meritoriouſly; ſo he is ready to diſcover his ability, by pouring out his Spirit to ſave efficaciouſly. *Ho*, every powerleſs ſinner then, here is a powerful Saviour, ready to ſave you freely, without money and without price; having no merit but only this, that you merit hell and damnation: having no power but this, that you are under the power and ſtrength of ſin. If you could merit any good, you would have no need of Chriſt to ſave you by price; if you had power to help yourſelf, you would have no need of Chriſt as a Saviour to ſave you by power: and, therefore, it is even becauſe you have no merit, no power, no grace, no good, that this all-ſufficient Saviour is offered to you, and boding himſelf upon you ſo freely.

If the ſtrength of ſin could be broken any other way, the ſtrength of a Saviour would not be thus freely offered by the great God unto you: God would not expoſe his great eternal Son to contempt, by offering him thus

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to poor ſinners, if they could be ſaved without him. But, though you have contemned him all your days, to your own ſhame, in deſpiſing your own mercy; yet now again he is offering himſelf anew to you, as fully and freely as ever: and think not the leſs of ſin, that ſalvation from it is ſo freely offered to you, and ſo freely boded upon you by this goſpel; for, I declare to you, in the Lord's name, that this free diſpenſation of the grace of God to you, is a greater buſineſs, and more momentous, than the tongues of men and angels can expreſs: for God to come and offer his Chriſt, and for Chriſt to come and offer himſelf, to ſave you from the ſtrength of ſin, is more than if he ſhould offer you ten thouſand worlds.

There is more of the glory of God in one word of the goſpel, in one line, one ſentence of the goſpel, than in all heaven and earth beſide; more of God's glory ſhines in this goſpel of grace, wherein he freely offers his pardoning and purifying grace, to take away the guilt, and filth, and power of ſin; more of his glory ſhines here, than ſhines in the making of heaven and earth: for, here the great Counſel of God, working from all eternity, is diſplayed. In the work of creation he opens his hand, as it were; but in this goſpel-diſpenſation he is opening his heart, and diſcovering his deep deſign, eſpecially of redeeming love through Chriſt, to the glory of all his perfections, in deſtroying ſin and ſaving the ſinner.

Think not the leſs of ſin then, that ſalvation from it is offered ſo freely, and at ſuch an eaſy rate: for as you cannot have it at all, unleſs you have it freely, conſidering your loſt, doleful, and deſtitute circumſtances; ſo the thing offered to you is moſt becoming to infinite Majeſty to offer, and moſt declarative of the infinite evil of ſin. For the things offered amount to no leſs than an infinite price to ſave from the guilt of ſin, and infinite power to ſave from the ſtrength of ſin: for, Chriſt, in all his fulneſs of merit and Spirit, is laid to your hand. And therefore, lay your hand to your heart, and ſee if it be panting after, and welcoming a Saviour or not, and cloſing with him for righteouſneſs and *ſtrength.* *Say not,* the ſtrength of ſin is great, the

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ſtrength of enmity, the ſtrength of unbelief, the ſtrength of other ſins ſtand in the way; for the ſtrength of ſin is the very reaſon for which Chriſt is offered to you, and the very thing which he is offering to take away by his almighty ſtrength. What, ſay you, can he not do it without me? Yea, but he will not do it without your conſent: it is his ſtated method of ſaving; he does not ſave any againſt their wills, but by making them willing, and gaining their conſent. And, what is the meaning of this free offer, but to gain your full conſent?

Well then, O ſinner, is it come to this with it, *What wilt thou that he ſhould do unto thee?* Wilt thou have Chriſt to pull down the ſtrength of ſin, and of all your luſts and idols? Is your heart ſaying, O welcome, Jeſus, to ſave me a poor ſinner, not only from the guilt of ſin, by thy pardoning grace; but from the ſtrength of ſin, by thy ſanctifying grace? Why then, there were ground to conclude the work of power is begun: "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power." If you have no manner of will that Chriſt ſhould ſave you from the ſtrength of ſin, alas! then, who is to blame that you die in your ſin, and periſh under the power of it?

But, perhaps, the caſe of ſome one perſon or other may be this, Alas! I not only feel the ſtrength of ſin that you have been ſpeaking of, but alſo a ſtrength of unwillingneſs to be ſaved from it; and if I were willing, and ſo and ſo diſpoſed, I might be welcome: but while it is not ſo, is there any hope for me?

I anſwer, 1. This ſtrong Redeemer is offered to all the hearers of the goſpel without an *if*. The covenant of works is a covenant of *ifs; if* you do, you ſhall live; *if* you be ſo and ſo qualified, you ſhall be ſo and ſo bleſſed: but it is not ſo in the abſolute promiſe of the covenant of grace. And as the promiſe of the covenant is without an *if*; ſo the offer of the goſpel is without an *if*, to whoſoever will, whoſoever pleaſes. It is true, he only that believes ſhall be ſaved; but as they are different queſtions, Who they are that ſhall be ſaved? and, Who they are to whom ſalvation is offered? So, ſeeing ſalvation is of faith, that it may be by grace, the mean-

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ing of theſe words, "He that believes ſhall be ſaved," is, He that will have ſalvation freely by grace, and without any *if*, he may have it.

2. If you feel the ſtrength of ſin, I hope the ſtrength of a Saviour will be the more welcome to you; and if the ſtrength of unwillingneſs to be ſaved be your plague, the healer is at hand, the ſtrength of a ſtrong and mighty Redeemer is at hand, in the offer and promiſe, ſaying, "He gives power to the faint, to him that hath no might he increaſeth ſtrength." Let Chriſt therefore get the glory of conquering your will: put your unwilling will into his able hand, ſaying, Lord, make me willing; O ſubdue the rebellion and reſiſtance of my will, and ſubject my will to thy will. They that are willing to have Chriſt, bending and bowing their will, are both convinced of their natural enmity, and partly cured of it. However, whether your willingneſs to part with ſin, and join with Chriſt, be cured or not; whether you be willing or unwilling, the offer of Chriſt is come to your door, inſomuch, that you are invited freely to come to him. Chriſt's complaint is, "You will not come to me, that you might have life;" which ſays, that though they were unwilling to come, yet they were invited to come. The goſpel-invitation then is to all poor ſinners to come, be who they will, and be the ſtrength of ſin that they are under never ſo great, that the Son may make them free, and then ſhall they be free indeed.

But if this call be ſlighted, I have this to tell you, that the ſtrength of ſin never exerted itſelf ſo much in all the ſins that ever you committed to this day, as it does in rejecting a Saviour. Ye may think, if ſin ſhould excite you to murder, and adultery, and blaſphemy, and other horrid things of that ſort, then the ſtrength of ſin would be great: very true, ſo it would; but I muſt tell you, whether you think it or not, that there is a thouſand times more of the ſtrength of ſin put forth in your ſlighting of Chriſt and his offered ſalvation, than is put forth in all the horrid villainies beſides that can be committed: for, as all your ſins would loſe their ſtrength by your laying hold on Chriſt for righteouſneſs and *ſtrength, ſo your* refuſing Chriſt to be your ſtrength, is

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the ſin that is the ſtrength of all your other ſins; they have ſtrength to command you, and ſtrength to condemn you, becauſe of your unbelief, which ſtrengthens every ſin; yea, and is the very ſtrength of the ſtrength of ſin; all your departures from the living God flow from the evil heart of unbelief, Heb. iii. 12. The faith of the goſpel would be the death of ſin, but unbelief keeps you under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin.

Perhaps, ſome may ſay, Though Chriſt be offered to me for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and I am called to believe in him with application, as the Lord my ſtrength; yet how ſhall I believe thus in him for ſtrength, unleſs I feel his ſtrength?

Why man, to feel his ſtrength, is ſenſe and not faith, and imports the preſence of the thing believed, and the enjoyment of the thing promiſed: but there is a vaſt difference betwixt believing the promiſe, and enjoying the thing promiſed: to believe the promiſe of ſtrength in the Lord Jeſus, is to take his word, even when you want the thing promiſed, or want the feeling of it; for, *Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen*, nor felt; for, if they were ſeen and felt, they would not be the object of faith, but the object of ſenſe. Faith's proper object is nothing elſe but the word of the God of truth.

Why, ſay you, but can I believe that Chriſt will be my ſtrength, without getting ſtrength to believe.

I anſwer, Strength to believe is one thing, and to believe in Chriſt for ſtrength is another; ſtrength to believe is God's enabling one to the act of faith; but to believe for ſtrength, is faith's acting upon Chriſt the object held up in the word of promiſe. And again, though none can believe, without getting ſtrength to believe; yet it is one thing to get ſtrength to believe, and another thing to get the feeling of that ſtrength; for, though faith cannot be acted without the feeling of that power and ſtrength of God within the man; yea, ſo far is the believer many times from feeling any ſtrength within him when he believes, that he feels nothing but want and weakneſs, utter inability and impotency; which makes him go out of himſelf, and look to the ſtrength of Chriſt that lies in the goſpel-offer and pro-

miſe. Nay, the very language of faith ſuppoſes, that the man hath no feeling of ſtrength in himſelf, but believes his ſtrength to be in the Lord. Faith is not acted in the ſenſe of ſtrength, but in the ſenſe of weakneſs, ſaying, *In the Lord only have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*

But, ſay you, If I felt the ſtrength of ſin broken, then I might believe in him as my ſtrength, and take him for ſuch; but, how can I believe in him as my ſtrength, and perſuade myſelf that he is ſo, according to the offer and promiſe of the goſpel, when I find the ſtrength of ſin ſtill remaining?

Answ. 1. The work of God, in breaking the ſtrength of ſin, and the feeling of that work, is the fruit of faith; and the reaſon why you do not feel that work of God, is becauſe you do not believe his word: "If you would believe, you ſhould ſee the glory of God."

2. The word of God, wherein he offers and promiſes to be your ſtrength, is the ground of faith, upon which alone the perſuaſion of faith is to be founded. Beware of confounding the ground and foundation of faith, with the fruits, marks, and effects of it. The ſenſible decay of the ſtrength of ſin, is a mark, a fruit, and effect of faith, and might yield a perſuaſion of ſenſe: but God's word alone is the ground and object of faith; and to build the perſuaſion of faith upon it, is the very means of producing all theſe fruits of faith that are the objects of ſpiritual ſenſe. To ſay, therefore, that you cannot believe in Chriſt as your ſtrength, till you feel the ſtrength of ſin once broken, is the ſame as if one ſhould ſay, I cannot lay the foundation, till once I ſee the houſe is built; I will not come to the phyſician, till once I ſee the diſeaſe healed. Nay, if you ſaw the houſe well built, what need would there be of laying the foundation? If you ſaw your plagues healed, what need would there be of coming to the phyſician? If you felt the ſtrength of ſin removed, what need would there be of employing Chriſt for ſtrength? Nay, the very feeling of the ſtrength of ſin, which you make the reaſon why you cannot believe, is the very reaſon why you ſhould believe, and lay ſtreſs upon the divine teſtimony con-

concerning Chriſt, with particular application of him to you as your ſtrength.

My friends, Chriſt puts himſelf in a promiſe for your uſe; he puts his righteouſneſs in the promiſe, his ſtrength in the promiſe, his grace in the promiſe; and Chriſt hath put himſelf there, that faith may ſeek him there: therefore, ſeek the Lord and his ſtrength; otherwiſe the ſtrength of ſin will be your death. There are but two ways wherein it can be ſuppoſed the ſtrength of ſin may be broken or removed; either by the law, or by the goſpel. As to the law, as a broken covenant, it may well diſcover ſin and condemn it, and you for it; but it is ſo far from giving ſtrength againſt it, that ſin gathers ſtrength from it, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law*; which is the ſubject I purpoſe to treat of, in the next doctrine. Therefore, it is only in the goſpel, and the promiſe thereof, that ſtrength is to be found; and the ſtrength that is in the promiſe, is the ſtrength of Chriſt, in whom all the promiſes are Yea and Amen: and hence when you quit the promiſe by unbelief, you quit the ſtrength of Chriſt; when you rely on the promiſe by faith, you rely on the ſtrength of Chriſt: curſed unbelief, then, gives ſtrength to ſin; whereas faith ſets the ſtrength of Chriſt againſt it. O may this goſpel come to you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt.

Let me cloſe this purpoſe with a word to you that are believers, and have fled for refuge from the ſtrength of ſin, to the ſtrength of a Saviour. If this hath been your courſe, I muſt tell you, though the free offer of the goſpel was your warrant to take that courſe, yet the great power of God was the thing that determined and enabled you thereunto: therefore, bleſs him that gave you counſel; for now the ſtrength of ſin is broken.

Alas! may one ſay, that hath fled to Chriſt for ſtrength, if the ſtrength of ſin be broken in all that have fled to Chriſt, then I think, I am a ſtranger to him; for I feel the ſtrength of ſin more than ever.

Answ. Sin is not always ſtrongeſt, when the ſtrength of it is moſt felt. The world, that are under the power

and dominion of ſin, have no ſenſe or feeling of the power of it, becauſe it is their element: even as a man that is in the water, feels not the weight of it, becauſe he is in the element of it; but, bring him out of the water, and put a tub full of water on his head, he will then find the ſtrength and weight of it, becauſe he is not within its element. The wicked world feel not the ſtrength of ſin, becauſe they are under the power of it, and within the very element of ſin's ſtrength: but, believer, thy beginning to feel the ſtrength of ſin, ſays, thou art getting out from under the power of it; yea, the prevailing power of ſin may ſometimes take place, where the killing and domineering power of it is broken: *Iniquity prevails againſt me*, may the believer ſay; and yet, *Sin ſhall not have dominion over him; for, he is not under the law, but under grace.* But tho' the ſtrength of ſin be broken in you, believer; yet even the broken ſtrength of ſin may be ſo great, as to break your heart, and break your back, and break your peace, and break your confidence and courage: therefore, as you have begun to flee to Chriſt for refuge from the ſtrength of ſin, ſo you muſt hold on; living by faith on him as your ſtrength, and that in the courſe of all his appointed means, ſuch as reading, hearing, meditating, watching, and praying, and guarding againſt all the motions of that ſtrong enemy; and particularly againſt the firſt motions of ſin, and the firſt beginnings of it: great evils ariſe out of ſmall beginnings; one ſpoonful of water will quench that fire, which afterwards whole buckets cannot abate. Therefore, reſiſt the beginnings of ſin, as you would reſiſt the devil. When ſin does not ſeem to be ſhewing all its ſtrength, that which it aims at, even in its weakeſt aſſaults at firſt, is to put forth its utmoſt ſtrength: *Watch, therefore, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:* and let not down your watch; for if you watch one half-hour, and think you may ſleep ſafely the other half, The Philiſtines will be upon you, Samſon. Whenever you begin to ſleep in ſecurity, ſin will waken upon you in its ſtrength and fury, though it were upon the back of a ſaving manifeſtation: yea, if you have *been upon the* mount with God, even upon the top of

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the mount; Satan, if he can, will throw you down from the pinacle of the temple: therefore, keep near to your Lord, your ſtrength.

And whatever means you uſe, beware of going back to your old huſband the law; for, as I deſign to ſhow in the following doctrine, the law, inſtead of helping you, will hurt you. If you wind up a clue of legal performances, expecting to overcome ſin that way, you will find it vain labour, and that you muſt wind it off again, and begin upon a new bottom, namely, Chriſt, the Lord your righteouſneſs and ſtrength. To work hard in the duties of religion, without faith in Chriſt, as your righteouſneſs, for acceptance, and ſtrength, for aſſiſtance, is as vain labour, as for a weaver to throw the ſhuttle from one ſide of the web to the other, without a thread in the ſhuttle. Why, let him work never ſo hard with feet and hands, it is loſt labour, he will never make out his web that way; yea, he but waſtes his ſtrength in doing nothing. Therefore, being divorced from the law, as a covenant of works, and condition of life, and married unto Chriſt, live upon your new Huſband Jeſus Chriſt, and live near him by faith, that you may bring forth fruit unto God. The more you live under grace, the more free will you be from the ſtrength of ſin; but the more you live under the law, the more will you be under the dominion of ſin: for, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.*

SERMONS LXXV, L

1 Cor. xv. 56.

—*The strength of sin*

[The third and fourth Serr

THAT sin hath a gre
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it is dreadful ab ... w is the strength of sin.
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before it, w
lxxii. 15. ... prove that the law is the strength of
of the po ... see a cluster of proofs for it, Rom. vii. 5,—
their sc ... with Rom. vi. 14.; where you see, that
them ... of man's being under the dominion of sin, is
ther ... being under the law; which plainly proves, that
th ... strength of sin is the law: But it is needless to insist
proving what is expressly asserted in the sacred text.

I. The first question I proposed was, What law i
that here is said to be the strength of sin? For unc
standing this, you would consider, that the law is tal
two ways;

1. More largely, for the whole revelation of the
and mind of God in the word; *To the law and to*
testimony; if they speak not according to this, it is bec
they have no light in them, Isa. viii. 20. It is not in
sense that you are to understand the law here; for t
the law is not the strength of sin, but is rather
means of light, life, and strength against sin, Psal. c
1, 2, 3, &c. For, in this respect, it contains not

ſtanding, to hear, that the ſtrength of ſin is the law. If the apoſtle Paul had been living and preaching in our day, it is likely, upon his delivering ſuch doctrine as this, he had been taxed as a ring-leader of Antinomians and enemies to the law: and it is plain from his epiſtle, he did not eſcape this reproach, which therefore we find him wiping off, Rom. iii. 31. *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we eſtabliſh the law.* Why, but is it poſſible to eſtabliſh the law, and yet aſſert, that the ſtrength of ſin is the law? How can this be? Yea, it may be aſſerted in a conſiſtency both with the honour of the law, and with a caſting the greateſt contempt upon ſin: and therefore it is an eſſay to open this myſtery, that, through grace, I would endeavour at this time, namely, That the ſtrength of ſin is the law.

After a communion ſolemnity, the battle is to be expected; for even in the banquetting-houſe, the banner of love ſuppoſes a battle at hand; yea, a battle preſent, as well as a battle to come: now, the ſtrength of the battle, to be ſure, is to be againſt the ſtrength of ſin. Believers, that know what it is to be brought to the banquetting-houſe, do alſo know that ſin is the great enemy they have to combat with: and if it be aſked, on the one hand, Where the believer's ſtrength lies? Surely it lies in the Lord Jeſus, his righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and in the banner of love and grace that he ſpreads over his people, who are not under the law, but under grace. And, ſince the apoſtle ſets the law and grace in oppoſition to one-another, and ſince the love and grace of God in Chriſt, is the banner and ſtrength of the believer, it is no wonder if it be aſked, on the other hand, Where the ſtrength of ſin lies? Then the apoſtle anſwers it in this manner, ſaying, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.* Hence Chriſt and the law are the two main ſtrengths here oppoſed: *The ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Surely there is a greater myſtery in ſin than the world can imagine, particularly in that it could, in a manner, get the law of God upon its ſide, and ſet the law and the Law-giver at variance, inſomuch, that the main battle ſtands betwixt them, as being the two great con-

tending parties and oppoſing powers; for, as the ſtrength of the believer is Chriſt's, ſo the ſtrength of ſin is the law. ***

Having elſewhere finiſhed the firſt doctrine, I laid down from theſe words; I come now to the ſecond doctrine propoſed which was,

DOCT. "That the ſtrength of ſin is the law:" Or thus, "That the law of works, is the ſtrength of ſin to the ſinner that hath violate and broken it."

The method I premiſe, after proving that the law is the ſtrength of ſin, is the following,

I. To enquire what law is the ſtrength of ſin.
II. What ſtrength it is that ſin hath from the law.
III. What ſin the law is the ſtrength of.
IV. How and in what reſpect the law is the ſtrength of ſin.
V. Whence it is that the law is the ſtrength of ſin.
VI. Make application of the whole in ſeveral uſes.

I am firſt to prove that the law is the ſtrength of ſin. You may ſee a cluſter of proofs for it, Rom. vii. 5,—9. compared with Rom. vi. 14.; where you ſee, that the reaſon of man's being under the dominion of ſin, is his being under the law; which plainly proves, that the ſtrength of ſin is the law: But it is needleſs to inſiſt in proving what is expreſly aſſerted in the ſacred text.

I. The firſt queſtion I propoſed was, What law is it that here is ſaid to be the ſtrength of ſin? For underſtanding this, you would conſider, that the law is taken two ways;

1. More largely, for the whole revelation of the will and mind of God in the word; *To the law and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this, it is becauſe they have no light in them*, Iſa. viii. 20. It is not in this ſenſe that you are to underſtand the law here; for thus the law is not the ſtrength of ſin, but is rather the means of light, life, and ſtrength againſt ſin, Pſal. cxix. *1, 2, 3, &c.* For, in this reſpect, it contains not only pre-

precepts to obey, but alſo promiſes of ſtrength; and the whole covenant of promiſe, which is the mean of conveying ſpiritual life and ſtrength. Now, in this ſenſe, it is not oppoſed to the goſpel of the grace of God, but contains the goſpel in it; and therefore the law, under this conſideration, is not here intended.

2. More ſtrictly, the law is taken for the old-covenant rule of perfect obedience; and under this form, *Do, and live.* In this ſenſe it is the ſtrength of ſin, as being oppoſite to the goſpel, or to grace, which believers are ſaid to be under; *Ye are not under the law, but under grace.* "All men beſides are under the power, rule, "conditions, and authority of the law as a covenant, "ſays Dr. Owen; even all men who are not inſtated "in the new covenant through faith in Chriſt Jeſus, "who ſet up in them and over them the rule of grace: "for all men muſt be, one way or other, under the "rule of God; and he rules only by the law, or by "grace: and none can be under both at the ſame "time."

But, for further clearing what this law is, that is here called the ſtrength of ſin, you may conſider it,

(1.) In its diſtinction: it is to be viewed formally, as a covenant of works; and materially, as a rule of life. The law, materially conſidered, is the matter of the covenant of works, the ſimple precept of obedience relating to the abſtaining from what is evil, and doing what is good; this is continually and eternally binding upon all rational creatures. The law, formally conſidered, is the form of the covenant of works, commanding all duties, with a promiſe of life upon our obedience; and forbidding all ſin, with a threatening of death in caſe of diſobedience. Thus it is a covenant of life or death, upon doing or not doing. In this reſpect, the believer is not under it; it is not binding upon him: he is, indeed, bound to do what is good, and ſhun what is evil, becauſe he is ſtill under the law, materially conſidered as a rule of life; but under no obligation to it formally as a covenant, as if he were to be juſtified upon his obedience, or condemned upon his diſobedience: No; he

is

is not under the law as a covenant, to be either juſtified or condemned. But then,

(2.) Conſider it in its parts, namely, the command, and the ſanction: the command of it, as a covenant, is not ſimply *Do*, or yield obedience; for this was incumbent on man before ever there was a covenant of works made with him, the law as a rule of holineſs being written on the table of his heart, in his firſt make and conſtitution, before ever God entered into covenant with him: but the command of the covenant of works was that ſame *Do*, in its connection with the ſanction of the promiſe of life upon doing, and threatening of death upon not doing; *Do and live:* if thou do not, thou ſhalt die.

(3.) Conſider it in its properties: it is holy, juſt and good, ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 12. Holy, in its command; juſt, in its threatening; and good, in its promiſe. The command of holineſs is a holy command, the threatening of death is a juſt threatening, the promiſe of life is a good promiſe. The holineſs of the command, requiring perfect perſonal obedience, flows from the holineſs of God, and the purity of his nature; the juſtice of the threatening of eternal death againſt ſin, flows from the juſtice of God, and the demerit of ſin; the goodneſs of the promiſe of eternal life upon man's obedience, iſſued from the ſovereignty of God, that was pleaſed to make ſuch a promiſe, not from the merit of that perſonal and perfect obedience, though it had been performed: no creature-obedience, whether of man or angel, hath any merit of condignity; all the merit that could take place, even in a ſtate of innocence, was a merit of paction: for, though man had obeyed perfectly, he did no more than what he was bound to do, and ſo could never merit; and therefore the promiſe of life, annexed to obedience, was a good promiſe, ſhewing forth the ſovereign goodneſs of God. Now, before this law was violated and broken by ſin, it could never be the ſtrength of ſin to man in theſe circumſtances; nay, it was rather, in every part and property of it, a bulwark againſt ſin: the command was a bright glaſs wherein the beauty of *holineſs* ſhined; the threatening of eternal death was a

flaming

flaming ſword to make ſin terrible; and the promiſe of eternal life, upon obedience, was a golden bait to make duty delectable. But now,

(4.) Conſider this law in the violation of it, and as it is a broken law, a violated covenant; and under this conſideration it is, that the law is the ſtrength of ſin, namely, to the ſinner that hath violated and broken it: and ſo it became the ſtrength of ſin to Adam upon his fall, and to all his poſterity, for failing in the obedience and righteouſneſs therein required. We have forfeited the life therein promiſed, and incurred the death therein threatened; "By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned," Rom. v. 12. And thus the life of God in man being loſt, thro' his being alienated from it, the life and ſtrength of ſin muſt ſucceed. The law then, that is the ſtrength of ſin, is the law of works, violated by the ſinner. It could not be the ſtrength of ſin to the keeper; but it is ſo to the breaker of it. To the perfect keeper of it, it is life; but to the leaſt breaker of it, it is death: and if the law be death to the breaker, it muſt be, of conſequence, the ſting and ſtrength of ſin, according to our apoſtle here, *The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law.* Now, the *ſting* and the *ſtrength* of ſin is much the ſame, even as the ſtrength of the bee lies in the ſting of it; and therefore the ſtrength of ſin muſt be the law, which, to the leaſt breaker of it, is death. The perfect keeper of the law is ſafe, if ſuch an one could be found; for it ſays, "The man that does theſe things ſhall live by them," Rom. x. 5. And this ſafety and life flows from the promiſſory ſanction of it, *Do, and live.* But every breaker of the law is a dead man; the law that he breaks is his death; for it ſays, "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them," Gal. iii. 10.; or, the man that does not theſe things, ſhall die in and by his ſin and diſobedience: and this death iſſues from the minatory ſanction of the law; "If thou do not, thou ſhalt die." The ſtrength of ſin then, is that violated law, that made death the wages of ſin, by the penal ſanction of it. But more of this ſin afterward.

II. The

is not under the law as a covenant, to be either
or condemned. But then,

(2.) Consider it in its parts, namely, t[illegible] a
and the sanction: the command of it, a[illegible] is;
not simply *Do*, or yield obedience; fo[illegible] the
bent on man before ever there was [illegible] no tra[illegible]
made with him, the law as a rule [illegible] strength
ten on the table of his heart, in [illegible] s, there is
stitution, before ever God ent[illegible] sin is the
him: but the command of th[illegible] n, it is from
that same *Do*, in its conne[illegible] ly a six-fold
promise of life upon do[illegible] d law of works,
upon not doing; *Do* [illegible]
shalt die. [illegible] of sin is from the law;

(3.) Consider it in [illegible] minion over all that are un-
good, says the apo[illegible]. For it is there declared, that
mand; just, in it[illegible] minion over them that are not under
The command [illegible] that man, who would not remain under
tening of dea[illegible] of God, should be put under the com-
is a good pr[illegible] yea, it follows necessarily, that these who
ing perfe[illegible] subject to the law of God, must be subject to
of God. [illegible] of sin. Sin receives from the law a kind of
threat [illegible] the dominion and rule over all the breakers of
justi[illegible] remain under it, and through unbelief abide
th[illegible] Christ, the end of the law for righteousness.
f[illegible] How the commanding strength of sin is from the law,
may appear more clearly afterwards; only, it cannot be
otherwise, if you consider it as a broken law. Where
the law is not broken, the law hath the command; but
where the law is broken, which is a transgression of the
law, there sin hath the command. It is true, the com-
manding power of the law still remains in point of obli-
gation, insomuch, that all that are under it are obliged to
obey it upon pain of death; but the transgressor of the
law is under the commanding power of sin, in point of
subjection; insomuch, if he is enslaved to it, and willing-
ly captivated by it: the broken law then is the strength
of sin, because the breaking of the command of the law
necessarily brings a man under the command of sin.
Though he remain under the command of the law, in
point

original, righteous, and indiſſolvable obligation;
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ondemnation upon all ſinners; and this gives ſin a
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ondemn a believer; "There is no condemnation
em that are in Chriſt," becauſe the law is ſatisfied,
in the commanding and curſing part thereof, in and
heir head Jeſus Chriſt; yea, they are not under
law, but under grace, being united to Chriſt, the
of the law: therefore, though the law ſtill condemn
ſin, yet it cannot condemn their perſon, nor in-
e a member of Chriſt under the curſe. They may
fraid of condemnation through unbelief; but they
more frighted than hurt. But as to all that are out
hriſt, ſin hath a condemning power over them; and
it hath from the law, which not only condemns their
but their perſon: the condemning ſentence lights
terminates on the ſinner, that hath no covert to
re him therefrom.

The working ſtrength of ſin is from the law: ſin is
lle thing in the ſinner; nay, it is a working thing;
whence its working ſtrength flows, ſee Rom. vii. 5.
"The motions of ſin that are by the law, did work
ir members, to bring forth fruit unto death." Why
he motions of ſin ſaid to be from the law, and theſe
ons ſaid to work in our members, but to ſhew that
working ſtrength of ſin is from the law? And how

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II. The ſecond thing promiſed here was, To ſhew what ſtrength it is that ſin hath from the law. In general, all the ſtrength it hath is from that violated law of works; it would have no ſtrength to enſlave us; no ſtrength to ruin us, if there were no law violated thereby; Rom. iv. 15. "Where no law is, there is no tranſgreſſion," no ſin: and where no ſin is, there is no ſtrength of ſin; conſequently, where a broken law is, there is ſin and its ſtrength; and ſo the ſtrength of ſin is the broken law: thus, whatever ſtrength ſin hath, it is from the law. But more particularly, I name only a ſix-fold ſtrength that ſin hath from the violated law of works, *viz.*

1. The commanding ſtrength of ſin is from the law; hence ſin is ſaid to have dominion over all that are under the law, Rom. vi. 16. For it is there declared, that it ſhall not have dominion over them that are not under it: and juſt it is, that man, who would not remain under the command of God, ſhould be put under the command of ſin; yea, it follows neceſſarily, that theſe who cannot be ſubject to the law of God, muſt be ſubject to the law of ſin. Sin receives from the law a kind of title to the dominion and rule over all the breakers of it, that remain under it, and through unbelief abide out of Chriſt, the end of the law for righteouſneſs. How the commanding ſtrength of ſin is from the law, may appear more clearly afterwards; only, it cannot be otherwiſe, if you conſider it as a broken law. Where the law is not broken, the law hath the command; but where the law is broken, which is a tranſgreſſion of the law, there ſin hath the command. It is true, the commanding power of the law ſtill remains in point of obligation, inſomuch, that all that are under it are obliged to obey it upon pain of death; but the tranſgreſſor of the law is under the commanding power of ſin, in point of ſubjection; inſomuch, if he is enſlaved to it, and willingly captivated by it: the broken law then is the ſtrength of ſin, becauſe the breaking of the command of the law neceſſarily brings a man under the command of ſin. Though he remain under the command of the law, in point

point of original, righteous, and indiſſolvable obligation; yet he is under the command of ſin, in point of ſubjection: hence the ſtrength of ſin to command, is the law as it is broken by ſin; the refuſing of ſubjection to the law of God, is a chuſing of ſubjection to the law of ſin: to break the command of God, is to give the command to ſin; and therefore the commanding ſtrength of ſin neceſſarily iſſues from the law, as it is broken by ſin.

2. The condemning ſtrength of ſin, is from the law; this is more eaſy to be underſtood, therefore I inſiſt not much upon it: ſin would have no ſtrength to condemn us, if the law did not condemn ſin, ſaying, Curſed be the breaker of it, Gal. iii. 10. Now, all men are included under ſin; therefore, all are under the curſe that remain under the law. The law hath paſt a ſentence of condemnation upon all ſinners; and this gives ſin a ſtrength to condemn. It is true, ſin hath no ſtrength to condemn a believer; "There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt," becauſe the law is ſatisfied, both in the commanding and curſing part thereof, in and by their head Jeſus Chriſt; yea, they are not under the law, but under grace, being united to Chriſt, the end of the law: therefore, though the law ſtill condemn their ſin, yet it cannot condemn their perſon, nor involve a member of Chriſt under the curſe. They may be afraid of condemnation through unbelief; but they are more frighted than hurt. But as to all that are out of Chriſt, ſin hath a condemning power over them; and this it hath from the law, which not only condemns their ſin, but their perſon: the condemning ſentence lights and terminates on the ſinner, that hath no covert to ſecure him therefrom.

3. The working ſtrength of ſin is from the law: ſin is no idle thing in the ſinner; nay, it is a working thing; and whence its working ſtrength flows, ſee Rom. vii. 5. 8. "The motions of ſin that are by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." Why are the motions of ſin ſaid to be from the law, and theſe motions ſaid to work in our members, but to ſhew that the working ſtrength of ſin is from the law? And how

that

that is, the apoſtle explains, verſe 8. "For ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence." Hence,

2. The warring ſtrength of ſin is from the law; hence, Rom. vii. 23. it is called the law in the members, warring againſt the law in the mind: yea, it wars and wins both; for it conquers and captivates even the children of grace, leading them captive to the law of ſin and death. This warring ſtrength of ſin iſſues out of the working ſtrength of it, for the work of it is the warfare of it; therefore, if the working ſtrength of it be from the law, ſo muſt the warring ſtrength of it be: and if it work and war in believers, how powerfully does it work and carry all before it in theſe that have no true grace, and when it meets with no oppoſition? It is true, the ſtrength of it appears moſt, where there is moſt oppoſition to it; but yet they are moſt under the ſtrength of it, to whom the ſtrength of it does leaſt appear.

5. The wounding ſtrength of ſin is from the law. Whence comes a wounded ſpirit, but from ſin? Whence comes the wounded ſtrength of ſin, but from the law? *A wounded ſpirit who can bear?* Why, what makes it intolerable? Even becauſe the broken law preſents the intolerable wrath of God, the interminable wrath of God, the everlaſting wrath of God, as the native fruit of ſin: and when eternal wrath and eternal death is ſtinging and tormenting the man's conſcience, what is then a-doing? Why, the matter is, *The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law;* and that ſting is ſticking in the heart, and wounding the ſpirit. Many, indeed, are not wounded by ſin, becauſe ſin is ſleeping, and the guilty conſcience ſleeping; but, the leſs they ſee of the wounding ſtrength of ſin, the more wounds are abiding them, when ſin revives and conſcience wakens.

6. The killing ſtrength of ſin is from the law, and the deſtroying power thereof; for the wages of ſin is death by the law, Rom. vi. 23.; ſoul-death, as well as bodily death: and the text ſays, that as ſin is the ſting of death, ſo the law is the ſtrength of ſin. And thus the law not only hath a condemning ſtrength, that it derives from *ſin, but* a damning and deſtroying ſtrength alſo; ſin could

could not damn the ſinner, if the law did not damn ſin, and give a damning ſtrength thereunto. All that die out of Chriſt, and under the law, will ly under the damning and deſtroying ſtrength of ſin for ever, which it derives from the law. Thus the moſt part are miſerably ſlain by ſin to eternity. There are ſome few, that are mercifully ſlain by it in time, as the apoſtle ſays, Rom. vii. 11. "For ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me:" it ſlew him, and put an end to his ſelf-righteous life; "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died," ver. 9. This is when the Spirit of God ſhews to a man the ſpirit of the law, that had ſtudied nothing before but the letter of it, and ſo kills all his hopes of life and juſtification by the deeds of the law.—Thus you have a hint at the ſtrength that ſin derives from the law; and whatever other ſtrength it hath, is reducible to theſe particulars named.

III. The third thing propoſed, was, To ſhew, what ſin the law is the ſtrength of. In general, the law is the ſtrength of all ſin, whether original or actual. The apoſtle ſpeaks here of ſin in general; *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.* More particularly,

[1.] The law is the ſtrength of original ſin, whether imputed or inherent. Imputed original ſin, you know, is the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, which is ours by imputation: inherent original ſin is the total want of original righteouſneſs, and the corruption of the whole nature, which we have by derivation from Adam. Now, the ſtrength of both is the law, and the ſtrength of both remains in all that are under the law, and out of Chriſt; for, while men are under the law, they are members of the firſt Adam, in whom as their federal head, they ſtand guilty of the firſt ſin, the violation of the law, or covenant of works; and from whom, as their natural root, they derive the whole depravation and corruption of their nature: for, *By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation;* and, *By one man ſin entered into the world,* Rom. v. 12. 18. The ſtrength then of this original guilt and corruption flows from the violated

lated law: all that are under the law, are guilty and filthy by nature, before ever they be capable of actual ſin. The moſt innocent-like children that are born, and come of Adam, are nothing but a generation of vipers by nature; the venom of the ſerpent is in them.

[2.] The law is the ſtrength of all actual ſin: it is not only the ſtrength of the root, but the ſtrength of the fruit; and, indeed, being the ſtrength of the fountain, it muſt be the ſtrength of the ſtreams. The fountain of ſin is the ſtrength of ſin; and if the law be the ſtrength of the fountain, it is the ſtrength of the ſtreams of ſin. While a man is out of Chriſt, the ſtrength of ſin remains, even though it were poſſible that he had not been guilty of any actual ſin; becauſe the ſtrength of original ſin, both imputed and inherent, remains, while he remains under the power of a violated law. But with reſpect to actual ſin, both inward and outward, the ſtrength thereof is this broken law, that men remain under, while they remain in unbelief, and out of Chriſt. For inſtance,

1. The ſtrength of Atheiſm ariſes from the broken law that men are under; hence, all that are without Chriſt, are ſaid to be without God, [or, ATHEISTS,] in the world, Eph. ii. 12. The power of Atheiſm is never broken, while people are under the law; becauſe, as the broken law can give them no right notions of God, being never deſigned of God as the mean of the ſaving knowledge of God to a ſinner, ſo it fills the ſinner with wrong notions of God, who is not to be found in the law, but in the goſpel. Since the violation of the law by ſin, God, in a manner, is gone out of the law, and is to be found no where but in Chriſt and the goſpel. Now, when the ſinners, that are under the law, cannot apprehend God, or ſeek him any-where but where they themſelves are, namely, in the law, and under the law; and as he is not there to be ſeen and found, no wonder that they begin to think that he is no-where, and conſequently to ſay in their heart, *There is no God;* and thus Atheiſm is ſtrengthened: and hence the moſt part of men have no clear notions of God at all, becauſe

they

they are under the law, where God is not preſent with them; or, if they who are under the law have any clear notions of God, ſuited to the ſtate they are under, it is a notion of him as a conſuming fire to the breaker of his law. But this view of God, if it be not mercifully ordered and over-ruled, for making a man to flee to Chriſt for refuge, that he may not be conſumed with that fire; if it be not thus mercifully over-ruled, I ſay, then, it is but a root of practical atheiſm; for, it makes him run away from God as Adam did, and hide himſelf, where he atheiſtically dreams that God ſhall not ſee him.

2. The ſtrength of unbelief ariſes from the broken law that men are under, and keep themſelves under to their own ruin. Why do they not believe the goſpel? They will not join in marriage with Chriſt, becauſe they are married to the law: hence marriage to Chriſt, ſuppoſes a divorce from the law, Rom. vii. 4. Mens legal faith, believing God will give them life and mercy upon their own obedience, or doing ſo and ſo, is the very ſtrength of unbelief: for goſpel-faith ſtands upon a quite other foundation, while it is a believing life and ſalvation to be had by the obedience of another, even of Jeſus Chriſt. Now, while the law of works ſays, Come to me for life; or, *Do and live;* and the goſpel of Chriſt ſays, "You will not come to me, that ye might have life;" and the ſinner's ears are open only to hear what the law ſays; he cannot believe what the goſpel ſays, nor can fall in with it; becauſe the remaining power of the broken law, which he is under, hath broken his courage and confidence in coming to God upon any other footing.

3. The ſtrength of enmity ariſes from the broken law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, and which men are naturally under. It is the ſtrength of enmity againſt God and Chriſt both, againſt law and goſpel both. On the one hand, while a man is under the law that is violated by him, it ſays, that he is not ſubject to the law that he is under, as it is with all that are under the law; *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. He

cannot be ſubject to the law he is under: and it is ſtrange that men ſhould naturally deſire to be under the law as a covenant, which yet they cannot be ſubject to as a rule, by reaſon of their carnal mind and wicked nature. However, the enmity of the nature is not cured, but ſtrengthened by the law: for, let God therein appear as a commanding God, we cannot obey him; let him appear as a threatening God, we cannot endure him; let the law thunder out vengeance, this may fill the man with ſlaviſh fear, but cannot create love; nay, it increaſes enmity.—On the other hand, as the carnal mind is enmity againſt God in the law, ſo the legal mind is enmity againſt Chriſt in the goſpel, Rom. x. 3. Men being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, do not, and will not, ſubmit unto the righteouſneſs of God. Hence,

4. The ſtrength of prejudice againſt Chriſt ariſes from the broken law that men are under, and wedded naturally unto: the law of works, that they are under, can neither ſave them itſelf, nor will it ſuffer them to go to Chriſt to be ſaved by him. Though the law cannot ſave a ſinner, but damns all that are under it, and remain under it; yet it points out no other way of ſalvation; it is the goſpel does that: the law leads a ſinner no where but to itſelf. It is true, the law is ſaid to be a ſchoolmaſter to lead unto Chriſt; or, as the word is, Gal. iii. 24. a *Schoolmaſter unto Chriſt;* or, *until Chriſt come.* At the ſchool of the law, under the convincing influence of the Spirit, men may come to ſee their need of a better maſter than the law, and ſo their need of Chriſt; but the law of itſelf, as it never revealed Chriſt, nor led to any other righteouſneſs but that which is perſonal; ſo, as it is a covenant of works, it ſeeks no righteouſneſs but the man's own perſonal obedience; and this being naturally impreſſed upon all men, they having ſome dim notions of life by doing, are filled with prejudice againſt life, by believing in another for righteouſneſs: hence, all that are wedded to the law, are filled with prejudice againſt the goſpel, as if it were no friend to the holineſs of the law; becauſe, forſooth, *it decries* their rotten righteouſneſs, in order to lay another

ther foundation on which true holineſs doth grow: but this the man under the law cannot underſtand. For,

5. The ſtrength of pride ariſes from the law; *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded: By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith*, Rom. iii. 27. As pride was the root of the firſt rebellion and breach of the law, while this temptation was yielded to, *You ſhall be as gods;* ſo, in the righteous judgment of God, the broken law is the root of pride. They that are under the law, are proud of that which ſhould lay their pride; proud of a trifle, proud of a nothing, proud of rags that cannot cover their nakedneſs; yea, of filthy rags that but defile them: they glory in their ſhame. Whenever a man comes in to Chriſt, he is aſhamed of that which was his glory, and counts that but loſs which he reckoned gain to him; but while he remains out of Chriſt, and under the law, he glories in that which is his ſhame. Is it not a ſhame for a man to glory in that which is but ſtinking dung? So do theſe ſecretly boaſt of, and pride themſelves in ſome poor petty duty and righteouſneſs of theirs; whereas the apoſtle calls all perſonal righteouſneſs dung, when compared with Chriſt's imputed righteouſneſs, Phil. iii. 8, 9. But much more, is it not a ſhame for men to glory in their ſins, as ſome do in their profane ſwearing, and drinking, and the like debauchery? Yet, even this is rooted in the violated law. For,

6. Even the ſtrength of profaneneſs ariſes from the broken law, that men are under and remain under by unbelief. Though profane perſons are evidently under no ſubjection to the law, yet even their profaneneſs proves that they are under bondage to it: for no man is under the bondage of ſin, and under ſubjection to it, but he that is under the bondage of the law, both in its commanding and condemning power; and though the ſenſe of their obligation to the law-command be of no force to bind them to obedience, yet the ſtrength of their ſin and diſobedience diſcovers the ſtrength of a legal temper, and the power of a covenant of works that they are under. You will think ſtrange to underſtand, that there is a ſecret boaſting of their law-righteouſneſs,

even under the open contempt they are pouring upon the authority of the law; and this appears, either in their ignorant hope, on the one hand; or their fooliſh deſpair, on the other.—On the one hand, their ignorant hope, thinking either the law will juſtify them in their preſent impiety, or upon their future amendment and penitency: hence profane men will juſtify themſelves in their curſing, and ſwearing, and drinking, though they ſwear by faith and conſcience; why, ſay they, that is no ſwearing: and though they drink away their ſtock, or tipple away their time; yet if they have any ſenſe or reaſon left, why, ſay they, that is no drunkenneſs: and as they juſtify themſelves, ſo they hope the law will not condemn them; and ſo they expect it will juſtify them: there is part of their ignorant hope, Deut. xxix. 19.—On the other hand, fooliſh deſpair may be latent at the root of their profaneneſs, which alſo diſcovers how much they are wedded to the law, even when they are breaking it. Perhaps they have eſſayed ſome duties, at a certain time of their life; or, at leaſt, been conſcious of the obligation they were under to obey the law; but having little hope of ſucceſs, or coming ſpeed that way, or of gaining life by their doing, they are become deſperate: and, the more they give up themſelves to profaneneſs, the more deſperate they grow, and hopeleſs of winning life by the law, or of paying the debt they owe to it; therefore, like deſperate debtors, finding themſelves out of capacity to pay it, they take on ſtill more and more, concluding there is no hope, Jer. xxii. 25. and xviii. 12.: Which does not at all prove that they have no manner of inclination to pay debt, but rather their ſecret willingneſs to do it if they were able, but that they have no hope. Such is the caſe of many profane perſons, they are deſperately taking on more and more debt to the law by their ſin, which is ſo far from proving them to be under the law, that as it declares them under the curſe of it; ſo it proves their ſecret inclination to do and live; that it is through deſperation they give up themſelves to all wickedneſs, having no hope of life that way: and the more their *profaneneſs* increaſes, the more their deſperation grows,

whereby

whereby they take on more and more debt, being hopeleſs of ever paying it, and expecting no profit in obeying the law, Job xxi. 15. Thus there is at the bottom a ſtrength of legal pride: becauſe the man cannot win life by his doing, therefore he deſperately fights againſt that law which he hath no hope of ſatisfying, and chuſes rather to be damned in his unrighteouſneſs, than be obliged to the righteouſneſs of another.

7. The ſtrength of hypocriſy and formality ariſes from the broken and miſtaken law; hence, they that are under the law, are under this deluſion, that the law will be pleaſed with any ſervice they may give it, though it be but outſide conformity thereunto; like the Phariſees, of whoſe legal performances Chriſt ſays, *Except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, you cannot be ſaved.* The legaliſt is a lover of himſelf, and his own righteouſneſs; and his ſelf-love blinds him, that he ſecretly ſuppoſes any thing that comes from him will be acceptable to the law. As the law is broken and violated, ſo it is but broken pieces of the law that he ſees, becauſe his underſtanding alſo is broken and blinded, he knows not the perfection thereof; and therefore, making to himſelf an imperfect law, he doubts not but it will be ſatisfied with his imperfect righteouſneſs: yea, he may think his righteouſneſs as perfect as the law is, ſaying, with the young man in the goſpel, "All theſe things have I done from my youth up." Thus hypocriſy and formality iſſue from the law as it is broken and abuſed, manked and maimed by them that are under it.

8. The ſtrength of ſecurity ariſes from the law, as it is broken and abuſed by men: for they that are under the law, make their very obedience to it (however moral and external only it is) a handle for their ſecurity, contempt, and neglect of the law. Thus ſaid the whore in Prov. vii. 14. "This day have I paid my vows, and offered my peace-offering; come let us take our fill of loves." Her duty hardened her in ſin and ſecurity; and thus many go to the church, they go to their prayers, they go to their duty; and then they imagine, that as they have made ſufficient amends for what is paſt, ſo

they have made ſufficient proviſion for preventing the bad effects of what is to come; they may now indulge themſelves in their pleaſure, ſince they ſuppoſe they have ſatisfied the Law-giver with ſome obedience. What is this but the ſtrength of ſecurity foſtered by the law? When men after ſuch and ſuch duties allow themſelves a latitude, they draw ſtrength to their carnal ſecurity from the law; "We ſhall have peace, though we walk after the imaginations of our hearts." And thus it is the ſtrength of negligence alſo: none are readily more negligent of the duties of the law, than theſe that boaſt of the law, and of winning to heaven by their good works; whence is this, but from the law of works cutting them ſhort of ſtrength through their abuſe of it? Why, is it poſſible that men will neglect duty, and yet think to be juſtified by their duties? Yea, and why ſo? Becauſe they make their own duty a ſalve for their ſore; and as they but ſeldom find their ſores, ſo they ſeldom make application even of their own ſalve. In a word, the law of works is thus the ſtrength of all ſin.

IV. The fourth thing propoſed, was, To ſhow how and in what reſpect the law is the ſtrength of ſin. This is the main queſtion and the grand myſtery here to be ſolved; for, that the law is the ſtrength of ſin, is plain from the text, wherein the Holy Ghoſt declares it in expreſs terms; terms that we durſt never have uſed, if the Spirit of God had not uſed them before us: but how the law is the ſtrength of ſin, remains yet to be conſidered. Beſides the hints that I have given before, there are theſe eight following reſpects, wherein the law of works, now violated and broken, is the ſtrength of ſin, ever ſince the original breach and violation thereof.

1. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of the extenſive malediction and curſe of the law, whereof the power and ſtrength of ſin is a principal part, and ſo the breach of it could not but neceſſarily infer the ſtrength of ſin. Death temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, was the penalty of the law, in caſe of the breach thereof. Now, ſpiritual death is nothing elſe but the power of ſin; and *this power* of ſin, or ſpiritual death, being the main

breach

breach of the law-threatening; "In the day thou eateſt thou ſhalt ſurely die," Ezek. xviii. 4. Gal. iii. 10. Now, this is the primary and radical reſpect wherein the law is called the ſtrength of ſin; any other particular that I am to mention, is rather ſecondary and conſequential unto this. Let this, therefore, be remembered, as the main thing, the chief reſpect wherein the law is the ſtrength of ſin, that it cannot be otherwiſe in the nature of the thing, and according to the conſtitution of the law, or covenant of works, denouncing the leading judgment of ſpiritual death upon the breaker of it. No ſooner was it broken, than mankind came under the curſe of it; and all men, by nature, being under the curſe of the law, they are by this very curſe under the power and ſtrength of ſin, becauſe the ſtrength of ſin is the main part of the curſe of the law: man's being given up to the power of ſin, is the main branch of the puniſhment of ſin, and the chief death threatened in the law. Temporal death is nothing, if you take away the ſtrength of ſin; it hath no ſting, no ſtrength to harm. Eternal death would have no being; and, as it lies in mere torment, is but the conſequential evil of ſin, and nothing to the intrinſical evil and power of it in ſpiritual death. This being the main threatening, the main curſe; to be under the curſe of the law, and under the power of ſin, is one and the ſame thing. In this reſpect then, eſpecially, the ſtrength of ſin is the law. Happy is the believer in Chriſt, that is delivered from the curſe of the law; for, *ipſo facto*, by this very mean he is delivered from the ſtrength of ſin: and ſad is your caſe, that are Chriſtleſs unbelieving ſinners, and who have never fled to Chriſt for refuge; for you, being under the curſe of the law, are neceſſarily under the power of ſin: This is the main part of your curſed ſtate, that the ſtrength of ſin is not felt, is not broken, is not weakened in you; but its commanding and condemning power both of them remain, and will remain while you are under the law, for the ſtrength of ſin is the law; and if you be not disjoined and divorced from the law, and joined and united to Chriſt the end of the law, the ſtrength of ſin will be your *death and* your doom for ever. But then,

2. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its office, to diſcover ſin, and make it known in the power and ſtrength of it; Rom. iii. 20. *By the law is the knowledge of ſin;* for, without the law, ſin was dead, ſays the ſame apoſtle, Rom. vii. 8. Dead, and, as it were, deſtitute of life and ſtrength, becauſe the life and power of it was hid and out of ſight; *For I was alive without the law*, ſays he, ver. 9. Before the commandment came with power, diſcovering the ſpirituality of the law, I was, as it were, without the law; and ſo they that are without law, are without ſin: for, *Where no law is, there is no tranſgreſſion.* Without the law, then, ſin was dead, and I was alive; the life and ſtrength of ſin did not appear; and I thought, I had an innocent and holy life of it: *But when the commandment came*, ſo as by the law I got the knowledge of ſin, then the life and ſtrength of ſin appeared; ſin revived, and I died. Before the law came with convincing power, might he ſay, ſin was dead, and I was alive; but whenever the commandment came, giving me the knowledge of ſin, then ſin was alive, and I died; my carnal confidence died, my hope of life by the law died: for then I ſaw the ſtrength of ſin. Thus the law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its diſcovering the life and ſtrength of it, which without the law is dead. Why, may one think, if ſin be dead without the law, then better want the law that gives life to it. To this we reply; The apoſtle here ſpeaks of ſin's being dead in point of the diſcovery thereof; and ſin's being dead in this ſenſe, and the ſtrength of it hid, is no mercy, but a miſery. It is the miſery of unconverted ſinners, that the ſtrength of it lies dead, and buried, as it were, in the rotten ſepulchre of their wicked heart and corrupt nature, where, like a ſtinking carcaſe, it is putrifying the whole ſoul; while yet the ſinner, that is alſo dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, does not find the filthy ſmell thereof; for ſin is nothing but death and putrefaction, but the dead man does not find the filthy ſmell of death and rottenneſs about him. The life and ſtrength of ſin is juſt ſpiritual death, and ſouldefilement; and when this death is hid and out of ſight *to the ſinner,* and unfelt by him, the ſtrength of that

ſin

ſin and death is not the leſs, but the more fearful and ſtrong, that it is not ſeen and felt: therefore, as it is a mercy to get effectual conviction of ſin by the law, ſo it is a miſery to be under the power and ſtrength of ſin, and yet not to know it; for then the ſinner, that is alive without the law, is but living in ſin, and yet dead while he lives: the ſtrength of ſin being dead and hid to him, while without the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its office to diſcover it.

3. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its deficiency and weakneſs through our fleſh to deſtroy the ſtrength of ſin; "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son, in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh," Rom. viii. 3. The law is ſaid to be weak through the fleſh, or through our corrupt nature, inſomuch, that it cannot juſtify a ſinner, it cannot ſanctify, it cannot ſave: the broken law cannot give life or ſtrength to the breaker of it; there is no help to be expected there againſt the ſtrength of ſin. Its commanding, condemning, enſlaving, and ruining ſtrength being from the law, is violated by us; ſurely no help againſt the dominion and rule of ſin can come from the law: yea, the law was never ordained of God to convey grace, or ſpiritual ſtrength, to the ſoul of man: had it not been ſo, the promiſe and the goſpel had been needleſs, as the apoſtle argues, Gal. iii. 21. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law." If it could have given life or ſtrength, then it would have produced righteouſneſs, and we ſhould have been juſtified by it. The law diſcovers ſin and condemns it, but gives no ſtrength to oppoſe it; it was never deſigned of God as his ordinance for the dethroning of ſin, nor for the deſtruction of the power of ſin. It was deſigned to declare the whole duty of man, but never had power to bar the entrance of ſin, nor to caſt out ſin, when it is once enthroned: and the broken law hath nothing to do with ſinners, but to judge, curſe, and condemn them; it neither contains any grace, nor communicates any for the deſtroying of ſin: therefore, *they that* are under the law, are under

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the dominion of ſin. The law is holy, but it cannot make them holy that have made themſelves unholy; the law is juſt, but it cannot make them juſt, nor juſtify them whom it does condemn; the law is good, but it can do them no good who have once broken it. Sin will never be dethroned by it, and will never give place to the law, either in its title to dominion, or in its power to exert the ſame. When the law preſſes on the conſcience of theſe that are under it, perplexing or diſquieting them; or when the commandment comes unto them, ſo as ſin revives, and they die, as I ſaid already; that is, when the law gives power to ſin to ſlay the hope of the ſinner, and to diſtreſs him with the apprehenſion of guilt and death; when the law is thus giving power to ſin to diſquiet and condemn ſinners, then, being preſt with a ſenſe of the guilt of ſin, and deprived of all reſt and peace in their minds, they will reſolve to caſt off the yoke of ſin, and endeavour it in ſome inſtances of duty, and abſtinence from ſin. But, alas! the law cannot enable them hereunto; it cannot give them life and ſtrength to go through with what their convictions preſs them unto; and hence they faint after a while, and grow weary, and at length give quite over, if grace come not in with that aid that the law cannot give.

4. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, not only in reſpect of its deficiency, for giving ſtrength againſt ſin; but in reſpect of its efficiency, in giving ſtrength to ſin through the corruption of our nature. As the law is weak through the fleſh, and affords no ſtrength againſt ſin; ſo it is ſtrong through the fleſh, for increaſing the ſtrength of ſin. In the former it is deficient, in this latter it is efficient through the fleſh; hence it is ſaid, Rom. iv. 15. *The law worketh wrath;* that is, not only wrath in God againſt the ſinner, that breaks the law; but alſo wrath in the ſinner againſt God, and enmity againſt him; and both theſe go together. If the law work wrath in God againſt the ſinner, the revelation of this wrath works wrath and enmity in the ſinner againſt God. It is only the love and grace of God, revealed in the goſpel, that works love; *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us,* 1 John *iv. 19.* Now, the law makes no revelation of the love,

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but only of the wrath of God; and therefore the law, as it is the revelation of wrath, worketh wrath. Try it when you will, you will find that it is only the revelation of God's love that worketh love; and that is the revelation of him in the goſpel, as a gracious God, a promiſing God, a pitying, and ſin-pardoning God, a reconciled God in Chriſt, this works love: but God, as revealed in the broken law, is merely a commanding God, a threatening God, a judging and avenging God, a terrible God, a conſuming fire to ſinners; and this works wrath and enmity. Now, love being the fulfilling of the law, and the ſum thereof; enmity is the ſum of all ſin: therefore, while the law works wrath and enmity, it is the ſtrength of ſin. The goſpel works love, the law works enmity: and as the faith of the goſpel works by love; ſo legal faith, or rather unbelief, works by enmity: and as the law works wrath and enmity, ſo it works fear and bondage; ſlaviſh fear, and dreadful bondage, which is attended with diſorder, diſturbance, and deſpair.

5. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its oppoſition to the goſpel, wherein grace and ſtrength alone is exhibited for the deſtruction of ſin. *The law is not of faith*, Gal. iii. 12.—The law and grace are ſet in oppoſition to one-another, in many places, as Rom. xi. 6. "If by grace, then it is no more of work, otherwiſe grace is no more grace; but if it be of work, then it is no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work." The command of the law, as a covenant of works, *Do and live*, ſtands directly oppoſite to the call of the goſpel, which is to lay hold on eternal life upon the doing of another: the threatening of the law, and the promiſe of it alſo, ſtand directly oppoſite to the profer and promiſe of the goſpel; the threatening of the law is a threatening of death to the ſinner for his diſobedience; the promiſe of the goſpel is a promiſe of life to the ſinner through the obedience of the SURETY: the promiſe of the law was a promiſe of life to him that works for it, and works perfectly; the promiſe of the goſpel is a promiſe of life to him that works not, but believes on him that juſtifieth the

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ungodly, Rom. iv. 4, 5. The conditional promiſe of the law, whereof the condition is no leſs than perfect, perſonal obedience, is directly oppoſite to the free and abſolute promiſe of the goſpel, and the freedom of the grace thereof, which is to be had without money and without price.—The righteouſneſs of the law, and the righteouſneſs of the goſpel, ſtand alſo directly oppoſite: the righteouſneſs of the law is only for the perfect man, that never ſinned; the righteouſneſs of the goſpel is for a ſinner, a ſinner overwhelmed with ſin: the righteouſneſs of the law is the righteouſneſs of man, and the righteouſneſs of the goſpel is the righteouſneſs of God; it is a righteouſneſs of another, and in another than ourſelves: it is a righteouſneſs imputed without works, to a ſinner believing in Chriſt, Rom. iii. 21, 22. The ſtrength of the law for obedience, was the natural ſtrength that God gave to Adam at firſt; it was home-bred, and yet but ſtrength only in the ſtream, which is dried up, ſo as by nature we are without ſtrength; and ſin hath the poſſeſſion of all the ſtrength of nature: but the ſtrength of the goſpel is a borrowed ſtrength, as well as the righteouſneſs a borrowed righteouſneſs, ſaying, *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength;* and ſo it is the ſtrength of the fountain, that can never be dried up. The law requires all to be done in our own ſtrength; the goſpel expects nothing to be done but in the ſtrength of another: the law gives no ground of claim for life, but by debt to the doer; the goſpel gives no claim for it, but by grace to the ſinner. Now, there can be nothing more oppoſite than law and goſpel; and therefore, in reſpect of the oppoſition of the law to the goſpel of the grace of God, it may be called the ſtrength of ſin, ſince it oppoſes that which alone can deſtroy that ſtrength.

6. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its agreement with the natural impreſſion that it hath left upon the heart of the children of men; and by reaſon of which they ſtand out againſt Chriſt, in and by whom alone the ſtrength of ſin is broken: I call it an agreement, becauſe the law, though it will never accept of any work that a ſinner can do, yet it requires the ſinner *to do whatever* it required at the firſt, and that under

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the pain of eternal death, which he hath already incurred by ſin; and under the pain of forfeiture of eternal life, which he hath already forfeit by his failure; for the law hath not loſt its authority to command, though we have loſt ability to obey. Now, the natural impreſſions that the law hath left upon the children of men, are agreeable to the original conſtitution of the law, or covenant of works. The law was the firſt liquor poured into the veſſel of man's nature, and the veſſel ſmells of that liquor that was firſt put into it; hence it is ſo natural for all men to expect life no other way but in a way of doing for it. And theſe legal impreſſions, left on our nature by the law, are the ſtrength of ſin in manifold reſpects, eſpecially in their agreement with the law to oppoſe Chriſt in the goſpel: hence the legal mind oppoſes Chriſt as a Prophet, as it is ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and averſe from being taught this leſſon, taking up God as ſtill dealing with it in the old-covenant way. The legal conſcience oppoſes Chriſt as a Prieſt; for, whenever it is awakened, it knows nothing of ſeeking peace by the blood of Chriſt, but natively looks to the law, and its own obedience for it, ſaying, O ſince I have diſpleaſed God by my diſobedience, how ſhall I pleaſe him but by my obedience? If I have offended him by my ſin, how ſhall I pacify him but by my duty? It is as natural for conſcience thus to act and ſpeak when it is preſſed, as it is natural for a man to breathe in the air, or for a fiſh to ſwim in the water: hence the natural conſcience, inſtead of leading men to Chriſt, in whom alone God is well-pleaſed and ſatisfied, it leads them to the law, and ſo the quite oppoſite way to Chriſt. The legal will alſo oppoſes Chriſt as a King; for, when he is rejected as a Prieſt, he cannot be received as a King: for his ſpiritual kingdom is founded upon his Prieſthood, inſomuch, that they who receive him not for righteouſneſs, cannot receive him for ſtrength; and conſequently the ſtrength of ſin, both to condemn and command, remains. In a word, the will is unwilling to be ſaved in this way of grace, and the natural man cannot receive theſe things of the Spirit of God and

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the goſpel; men's legal notions and imaginations exalt themſelves againſt the knowledge of Chriſt, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. And they are ſo high and mighty, that nothing can pull them down but the power of omnipotency; the weapons that are mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God.—Again, theſe legal impreſſions left by the law, have a weakening influence upon the graces of the Spirit, where they are implanted; for the implantation of grace does not wholly root out the impreſſion of the law in time, ſuch a deep rooting it hath in our nature. Theſe weeds of legal impreſſions, that grow up in the garden of the heart, draw away the ſap and ſtrengh of the fruits of the Spirit, and weaken them.—— They either hinder or weaken faith, *For the law is not of faith:* it oppoſes both the doctrine of faith, and the grace of faith: it hinders and weakens repentance; for goſpel-repentance iſſues from that faith which the law oppoſes: it hinders and weakens love; for the man cannot love that God, whom, by the law, he apprehends to be an enemy: and hence it hinders and oppoſes joy in the Lord; for the legal ſpirit is a ſpirit of heavineſs, in oppoſition to joy; and ſo it eats out the man's ſtrength, for, *The joy of the Lord is our ſtrength:* and, conſequently, when thus the law weakens and oppoſes the ſtrength of grace, in this reſpect it is the ſtrength of ſin; its agreement with the natural impreſſion that it hath left on the hearts of the children of men, creates a natural diſagreement betwixt us and Chriſt, betwixt us and the goſpel, and the grace of the goſpel. Pride of natural righteouſneſs ſtands up againſt, and oppoſes the goſpel-righteouſneſs.

7. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of the irritating quality of its precept upon corrupt nature; "Sin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence," Rom. vii. 8. And here it is ſtrange to think of the different effects of the law of works, in ſtrengthening ſin on the one hand, by its agreement with proud and ſelf-righteous nature, as I have been ſhewing; and, on the other hand, by its *diſagreeableneſs* with, and oppoſition unto carnal and

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corrupt nature, which is irritated by the law. Sin takes occaſion by the commandment, and ſo the law is the ſtrength of ſin; as it is in the Latin proverb, *Occaſio facit furem*, "Occaſion makes the thief." Thus Achan; I ſaw ſuch and ſuch things, and ſeeing them I coveted them, and took them. The law does not, properly ſpeaking, give occaſion to ſin; but ſin takes occaſion from the law to be operative and working; yea, ſuch is the corruption of nature, that the more God's law forbids ſin, the more we break out into ſin; as a dam or bank made in the midſt of a ſtrong current of water, the more it is dammed up, the more it ſwells; and, when once it prevails, it breaks over with the greater violence: ſo here, the more God's law oppoſes ſin, the more does ſin riſe, and ſwell, and rage: *Nitimur in vetitum*, &c. Why this? Even becauſe there is ſuch a contrariety betwixt God's holy law and our unholy nature.—Again, in regard of righteous nature, now proud and ſelfiſh, they ſeem to agree, and do really ſo in ſome things: for, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, man would have had a perſonal righteouſneſs to have gloried in, if God had deſigned him life that way; and proud nature abuſed that original conſtitution, which God never deſigned ſhould ſtand but for a little, to be like a ſcaffold for building up a better covenant; yet proud nature grips, as I ſaid, to that wherein the law would have exalted it, if it had ſtood: but, in regard of corrupt and carnal nature, there is ſuch an oppoſition to the very command of the law, that it is not ſubject thereto, neither can be; nay, inſtead of ſubjection to it, it is irritate and increaſed by it. In this ſenſe it may be ſaid, that when the law enters, offence doth abound: for ſin, like a mad horſe, rages, and is the more furious, that it is checked with the bridle.

8. To name no more, As the law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of the irritating quality of the command upon corrupt nature; ſo the law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of the ſeverity of the ſanction thereof; which, ſo far as it is regarded by us now in our obedience to the law, in theſe our ſinful circumſtances under a bro-

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ken covenant of works, cannot but be the ſtrength of ſin and ſelf, to all that are influenced in their obedience, with a reſpect thereunto. The ſanction of the law, by which it was caſt into the form of a covenant of works, was the promiſe of life upon our obedience, and threatening of death upon diſobedience: now, to obey, or do, from a regard to that ſanction, is to do duty, from the hope of eternal life by doing; and to ſhun evil, from the fear of eternal death and damnation: but, for a man to be thus under the co-action and compulſion of the law, is to be under the power of ſin, notwithſtanding his beſt performances; for the man that is acted and influenced by that ſanction, cannot now be acted from love to God, which alone is true holineſs, nor from a view to God's glory and honour, but merely to himſelf; which is evident from his legal hope of heaven, upon his obedience, influenced by the promiſſory ſanction of the law; and from his legal fears of hell, upon his diſobedience, influenced by the penal ſanction of the law. This power of the legal ſanction that he is under, keeps him under the power of ſin; for, like a ſtrong chain, it fetters him, that he cannot act freely and willingly, nay, he acts only in a mercenary and ſlaviſh way, like a ſlave to the law, and not like a ſervant to God. Believers, ſo far as they are delivered from the law, act freely, and with a willing mind; not by the co-action and compulſion of the law, but without reſpect either to the law-promiſe of life upon doing, or the law-threatening of death upon not doing; being, by virtue of the new nature, ready to do the will of their God and Father in Chriſt with pleaſure: this title to life, and ſecurity from death, ſtanding allenarly upon the obedience and ſatisfaction of their Head and Surety. Therefore, there is no law-promiſe of life, or threatening of death, that they have to regard; and conſequently their obedience muſt be chearful, free, willing, and natural, without all legal compulſion. As the body needs no law-ſanction, to compel it to eat, drink, ſleep, walk, or ſtand, or do any of the works of nature; even ſo, it is natural to the believer, according to the meaſure of his

his freedom from legal bondage, to act freely in the Lord's ſervice, without the coaction of the law: being looſed from it, the ſtrength of ſin is broken, and he is at liberty to ſerve the Lord without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him. But ſuch as are under the power of legal compulſion, and are acted and influenced by a regard to the ſanction of the law-promiſe and threatening, and ſo under the power of legal hopes and fears; that is, the hope of eternal life upon their doing ſo and ſo, and the fear of eternal death upon their failure, they are, on this very account, under the power and ſtrength of ſin; where, if they remain, and live, and die, their hope will fail them, and their fears will come upon them: for, as their HOPE is a dead hope, that cannot purify their heart; ſo their FEAR is a ſlaviſh fear, that makes them depart from God. It is true, under the power of theſe legal hopes and fears, influenced by the promiſſory and penal ſanction of the law, the poor ſinner that is thus in bondage to the law, may perform a multitude of duties, and be very ſtrict and devout, as if who but he? and yet, the more he does, the more he undoes himſelf, being intangled in that yoke of bondage, as the expreſſion is, Gal. v. 1. The yoke but galls his neck, and holds him back from taking on Chriſt's eaſy yoke. Yea, in theſe circumſtances, he can bring forth no fruit that is truly and ſpiritually good: for, as they only that are divorced from the law, and married to Chriſt, do bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4.; ſo they that remain thus under the yoke of the law, can bring forth no fruit, but to themſelves and the devil.—Thus you ſee how and in what reſpect the law is the ſtrength of ſin. I proceed,

V. To the Fifth thing propoſed, which was, To ſhow whence it is that the law is the ſtrength of ſin. From what ſpring and ſource does this ariſe? whence comes it, that ſin ſhould have a commanding and condemning power over a man, that is under the law; and that, as the law cannot deliver him, ſo it detains him a captive unto ſin? Several reaſons of this doctrine are interſperſed among the particulars on the former heads: But, be-

ſide what hath been ſaid, I ſhall now offer the following:

1. That the law, now violated and broken, is the ſtrength of ſin, proceeds from the holineſs and juſtice of the Law-giver: "He is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity;" and, "Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of his throne:" Therefore, when his holineſs and purity appearing in the precept of the law, is croſſed by ſin, his juſtice and equity declared in the threatening of the law, cannot but break forth againſt ſin in the righteous puniſhment thereof. Now, ſin being the greateſt evil, and the greateſt evil deſerving the greateſt puniſhment; and there being no greater puniſhment of ſin, than that of puniſhing it by ſin, and giving up the ſinner to the power and ſtrength of it; therefore, this juſt and holy God makes the ſtrength of ſin to be the ſtrength of the ſanction of the law, to the greateſt ruin of the breaker of it. There is no evil like the evil of ſin, which is the tranſgreſſion of the law; and no judgment like the judgment of being given up to the ſtrength of ſin: therefore, the moſt juſt and holy Lawgiver makes the penalty of the broken law to be the ſtrength of ſin. So that to ſay, the ſtrength of ſin is the law, is ſo far from reflecting any diſhonour upon the purity of the law, that it is a declaration of the holineſs of the command, and the juſtice of the threatening both.

2. That the law is the ſtrength of ſin, proceeds from the nature of the Law, in the office that God hath deſigned and aſſigned to it; and that is, not to be the miniſtration of life, and ſtrength againſt ſin, but to be ſubſervient to the goſpel, which is the miniſtration of life and righteouſneſs, 2 Cor. iii. 7,—10. The law was never appointed of God to be the miniſtration of life, but of death, even ſpiritual death, and thereupon of further condemnation; but yet, as it is a miniſtration of death and condemnation, it is appointed to be a ſervant to the goſpel; and hence law-commands, and law-threatenings both, are brought into the goſpel-diſpenſation, to be ſubſervient thereto, and to illuſtrate the glory thereof, and make way for its powerful efficacy, for the pulling *down the ſtrong* holds of ſin, to which office the goſpel only

only is appointed of God. And as the darkneſs of the night ſerves to ſhew forth the brightneſs of the day; ſo the ſtrength of ſin, that ariſes from the broken law, ſerves to illuſtrate and manifeſt the ſtrength of grace, that is brought in by the glorious goſpel.

3. That the law is the ſtrength of ſin, proceeds from the very nature of Sin, and its direct oppoſition and contrariety to the law. You know, when two are of a contrary diſpoſition, they never agree together, but will ever be brawling and quarrelling one with another; ſo, whatever agreement there be betwixt the law, as a covenant of works, and proud ſelf-righteous nature, yet ſuch a diſagreeable couple is God's holy law and our corrupt nature, that there is a direct contrariety betwixt them. The law of God bears the image of God; it is perfectly juſt, perfectly holy, and like unto God the giver of it: but the corruption of our nature bears the image of the devil, being wholly unjuſt, and altogether unholy: ſo ſays the apoſtle, "The law is holy, but I am carnal; in me, that is, in my fleſh, dwells no good thing," Rom. vii. 14. 18. Now, as natural philoſophy teaches, that in winter-time, the coldneſs of the air and froſt, that may be about the fire, makes the heat of the fire more intenſe, ſo that it burns a great deal the faſter and fiercer; ſo God's law, coming to, and meeting with our corrupt nature, certainly it makes corruption more intenſe and more violent. Hence, when the commandment comes, ſin revives, and riſes up in the fury of its ſtrength; as, when a deadly foe comes upon one, the perſon gathers all his ſtrength together to oppoſe him. The ſtrength of ſin is not the leſs before the commandment come, or the law appear; but when the law appears, the ſtrength of ſin appears, and exerts itſelf: As fire and water are oppoſites, though at a diſtance; yet their oppoſition to one-another is not ſo evident till they meet and come together, and then there is a mighty ſputtering and ſtriving between them: ſo the holy law and the unholy heart are oppoſite, though they do not meet; but when once they meet together, the heart riſes, and rages, and oppoſes it like the devil. This appears when-

ever a man is convinced by the law, and the conviction is merely legal, ſo as the man ſees nothing but the ſpirituality of the law-command, and the ſeverity of the law-curſe: I ſay, when the conviction is merely legal, the ſeverity of the curſe raiſes a trembling devil of fear in the awakened conſcience, and the ſpirituality of the command raiſes a devil of enmity in the carnal heart.—And thus, from the very nature of ſin, the law is the ſtrength of ſin.

4. That the law is the ſtrength of ſin, eſpecially to theſe that are under the goſpel-diſpenſation, ariſes from the nature of UNBELIEF, and the malignant influence thereof; as is evident from that word of our Lord Jeſus, John iii. 18. "He that believes is not condemned; but he that believes not, is condemned already, becauſe he believes not in the name of the only begotten Son of God." He that believes not the goſpel, is condemned already by the law. Now, here conſider, what the law-condemnation is. I told you formerly, that the leading and ſevereſt part of the law-ſentence of condemnation is juſt the ſtrength of ſin; ſo as, to be under the curſe and condemnation of the law, is to be under the power of ſin, in its commanding and condemning ſtrength. But what influence hath the not-believing the goſpel upon a man's being thus condemned? Was he not in a ſtate of condemnation, though he had never heard the goſpel? Why then does Chriſt ſay, "He that believes not is condemned already?" Why, it demonſtrates, that though all the world be under the power of ſin, by the ſentence of the law; yet they that are under the goſpel, and believe not in the Lord Jeſus, their condemnation is condemnation indeed; they ſtand under the condemning ſentence of the law, and ſo under the power of ſin more than ever, becauſe the goſpel-news of freedom from that condemnation is rejected. It is not my office as a Saviour, might Chriſt ſay, to condemn them; "For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ſaved:" but it is the office of the law, as it is the miniſtration of death *and* condemnation, to condemn them; ſo that they are *condemned* already by another hand; yea, condemned already

already by the law, becauſe they believe not in me, who am not come to condemn them, but to ſave them. No ſooner is this goſpel-ſalvation rejected, but the law-condemnation is ſtrengthened and fortified; for then the law, which before was dumb and ſilent, as it were, after the goſpel hath ſpoken a word of freedom and ſalvation from the ſtrength of ſin, and the man refuſes and rejects it, the law opens its mouth, in a manner, ſaying in effect, I take inſtruments upon this refuſal of yours, that under my dominion and power you ſtand by your own conſent, and that the ſtrength of ſin ſhall not be abated, but increaſed; and let this ſtand regiſtrated and recorded in the book of conſcience, to bear witneſs to the equity and juſtice of my final ſentence, when the books ſhall be opened at the great day. In a word, unbelief holds and detains the man under the law, by refuſing Chriſt and the grace of the goſpel: and as the law is the ſtrength of ſin, ſo unbelief ſtrengthens the hands of the law, to kill, and condemn, and enſlave the ſinner under the commanding and condemning power of ſin; and if the law be the ſtrength of ſin, and unbelief the ſtrength of the law, then unbelief is the ſtrength of the ſtrength of ſin, as it contributes to keep the ſinner more under the law than ever.—Thus you ſee how the law's being the ſtrength of ſin ariſes from unbelief, which rejects the ſtrength offered in the goſpel for deſtroying ſin. And ſo much for the grounds of the doctrine.

VI. The Sixth thing propoſed, was, To make Application of this doctrine. And this we ſhall eſſay in the following uſes, *viz.* 1. In an uſe of Caution. 2. Of Information. 3. Of Examination. 4. Of Exhortation.

1*ſt*, The ſubject may be improved, we ſay, for Caution and Dehortation. Is the law the ſtrength of ſin, in the manner I have deſcribed?

1. The firſt caution I offer is, O man, woman, think not the worſe or the leſs of the law, that it is the ſtrength of ſin: nay, you have reaſon to think the better of it, and to have the higher thoughts of it, as it is the eternal rule *of righteouſneſs*; for, if it were not a holy law,

it would not irritate and exaſperate our unholy nature at that rate, ſo as to augment the commanding power and ſtrength of ſin: if it were not a juſt law, it would not condemn ſin at that rate, ſo as to give it a condemning ſtrength over the ſinner. That the law is the ſtrength of ſin, in the reſpect I have named, is ſo far from being a reflection upon, or a detracting from the holineſs and juſtice of the law, that it ſerves rather to illuſtrate the purity of the command of the law, as a rule of holineſs; and the equity of the penal ſanction thereof, as it is a covenant of works.

2. The ſecond caution is, As you are not to think the worſe of the law, ſo you are not to think the better of ſin, that the ſtrength of it is the law. As you are to think the better of the law, that it makes the troubleſome ſea of corruption to rage, and binds over the ſinner with ſtrong bonds of heavy curſes for his ſin, ſuch is the holineſs and ſtrictneſs of it; ſo you may think worſe of ſin, that turns ſuch a good thing as the law to ſuch an ill uſe, as to draw ſtrength to itſelf out of it; like a venomous beaſt, a viper, that ſucks poiſon out of the ſweeteſt flower.

3. The third caution I offer is, Think not to conquer ſin by the law, or by your perſonal obedience to it. That law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, can never be the deſtruction of it; it gives ſtrength to it, but cannot take ſtrength from it. They labour in vain, who think, by the ſtrength of their own beſt endeavours, to ſubdue ſin; for, do what they will, ſin hath ſtill dominion over them, becauſe they are under the law, Rom. vi. 14.: and all their endeavours are influenced by the law as a covenant of works; which makes their eſſays not only ineffectual for breaking the ſtrength of ſin, but rather effectual for augmenting the force and increaſing the ſtrength thereof.

4. The fourth caution we ſuggeſt is this, Think not that obedience to the law, as a rule of life, is needleſs or hurtful, becauſe the law, as a covenant of works, is the ſtrength of ſin: beware of thinking that God's writing the law in the heart, and that goſpel-holineſs and *conformity* to the law, as in the hand of a Mediator, is either

either dangerous or unneceſſary; this were an Antinomian principle indeed: but know, of a truth, that, "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God;" without holineſs, and conformity to the law, as a rule, no man hath evidence of juſtification, or of freedom from the law as a covenant; without holineſs there is no glorifying of God, nor edifying of man; without holineſs no adorning of the goſpel; without holineſs no evidence of love to God or Chriſt, who hath ſaid, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Uſe 2. The ſecond uſe ſhall be by way of Information. There is a number of neceſſary leſſons may be deduced from this doctrine, "That the ſtrength of ſin is the law;" ſuch as,

1. Hence we may learn, that there can be no juſtification before God, by the deeds of the law; for, if the law be the ſtrength of ſin, then it can never take away the guilt of ſin; Rom. iii. 20. "By the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified in his ſight; for, by the law is the knowledge of ſin." The force of this reaſon is very great; for, if it be the office of the law, under the influence of the Spirit of conviction, to give the knowledge of conviction of ſin, and ſo to condemn the ſinner, then ſurely it cannot juſtify him. And that it is the moral law the apoſtle here ſpeaks of, is plain; for, as it is that law by which men have the knowledge of ſin, and of which the ſame apoſtle ſaith, Rom. vii. 7. "I had not known ſin but by the law; for, I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet:" which is the moral law: ſo it is plain, chap. iii. from ver. 9th to 20th, ſpeaks of that law by which every mouth may be ſtopt, and all the world, Gentiles as well as Jews, may become guilty before God; or, as it is in the margin, *ſubject to the judgment of God:* ſo that it is a vain thing for any to alledge, that in theſe ſcriptures the apoſtle intends only the ceremonial law, and the deeds thereof.

2. Hence we may learn, that as there is no life or juſtification by the law of works, it being the ſtrength of ſin; ſo there is no new or milder law in the room

thereof, by which life and juſtification is to be obtained: for no new law can mend the matter; becauſe men remain under the ſtrength of ſin, by virtue of the old law, and in that condition cannot be juſtified by any law of God, being unable to perform any. Some cloud and darken the goſpel, by making it a new or milder law, requiring faith, and repentance, and new obedience, inſtead of the perfect obedience required in the covenant of works. The goſpel, properly ſpeaking, is no law, but a promiſe: and it might be eaſily evinced, that faith, repentance, and new obedience, are ſo far from being eaſier or milder terms, that they are harder conditions to us, in our lapſed ſtate, than perfect obedience was to Adam in a ſtate of innocence. And ſo the apoſtle argues againſt any ſuch new law; Gal. iii. 21. "If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law;" or, as it may be read, "Verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by A law." But there is no ſuch law given to fallen man, as could give life to him; therefore, there is no righteouſneſs, or juſtification, to be had by a law, but by a promiſe; no life by any new law, but by a new promiſe of mercy and grace in Chriſt Jeſus; "By the works of the law, no fleſh living can be juſtified. Eternal life is the gift of God, through Chriſt Jeſus our Lord."

3. Hence ſee, that there is no juſtification before God, partly by the law, and partly by the goſpel; or partly by our own righteouſneſs, and partly by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: for, as this detracts from the glory, ſufficiency, and perfection of Chriſt's righteouſneſs; ſo it renders our juſtification lame and imperfect, and conſequently void and null: for if the law be the ſtrength of ſin, and gives it a commanding and condemning power; then, till the law be ſatisfied, with a perſonal, perfect, and everlaſting righteouſneſs, the ſtrength of ſin remains, and ſo the man under it remains under condemnation. Why, the obedience of two put together, to make up a perfect obedience, is vain: for, in that caſe, the obedience both of the one and the other is imperfect, and ſo not conform to the law; therefore cannot

cannot be accepted for righteouſneſs: ſo that they who would be juſtified before God, muſt either bring to him a perfect and perſonal righteouſneſs of their own, and wholly renounce Chriſt; or elſe they muſt bring the perfect, perſonal righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and wholly renounce their own. It is one of the moſt ſoul-ruining deluſions among the generality of profeſſors in our day, that they are guilty of ſpiritual Bigamy; they think they muſt have *two* huſbands, Chriſt and the law both; they ſuppoſe that their own duties and righteouſneſs will not do their buſineſs alone without Chriſt's merit and righteouſneſs, which they hope will make amends, and make up what is wanting, and wherein they are deficient; and ſo his and theirs together is the ground of their hope: this is a popery, which makes Chriſt's righteouſneſs only a footſtool on which ſelf-righteouſneſs mounts the throne; yea, this is a Bigamy which Chriſt will not reliſh and put up with. If we be not married to Chriſt alone, as the end of the law for righteouſneſs, and divorced from the law, as a covenant, the ſtrength of ſin remains.

4. Hence ſee the excellency of the goſpel and the great advantage of a clear goſpel-diſpenſation. Why, the law is the ſtrength of ſin, but the goſpel is the weapon that pulls down the ſtrength thereof: for, it is the power of God to ſalvation from ſin; becauſe therein is revealed the righteouſneſs of God, from faith to faith, Rom. i. 16. Therefore, ſays the ſame apoſtle, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty thro' God, to the pulling down the ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt." It is the goſpel that is the revelation of divine grace; juſtifying grace, to pull down the condemning ſtrength of ſin; ſanctifying grace, to pull down the commanding ſtrength of ſin. It is true, the goſpel is not powerful this way, unleſs the Spirit of God accompany it, as a Spirit of faith, cauſing us to believe the goſpel ſavingly: but, whenever God ſaves a man from the ſtrength of ſin, as it is by hearing *the goſpel* that faith comes; ſo, it is by believing

lieving the goſpel that ſalvation from ſin comes; Rom. x. 15, 16. Mark xvi. 15, 16. "Go, preach the goſpel to every creature." What is that goſpel? It is the good news of grace and ſalvation to ſinners, thro' Chriſt, the Lord our righteouſneſs. Well, what will be the iſſue? "He that believes this goſpel ſhall be ſaved; he that believes not ſhall be damned." O Sirs, ſee then the excellency of the goſpel, which, as it is the inſtrument of God's power for working faith; ſo, being believed, is the power of God to ſalvation from the ſtrength of ſin, and ſo from wrath and condemnation.

5. Hence ſee, that ſin, under the goſpel, is ſtrangely aggravated. They that are not only under the law, as all are by nature, but alſo under the want of goſpel-light, no wonder that ſin reign there; they cannot but live in ſin, and in the perpetual violation of the law as a rule, who hear of no deliverance from the law, as a covenant: but for theſe who live under the goſpel, which is the only antidote againſt the ſtrength of ſin, their ſin is dreadfully aggravated; their living in ſin, and remaining under the ſtrength of ſin, is an evidence of their unbelief, whereby they reject the goſpel, and ſo keep themſelves under the curſe of the law, of which curſe the ſtrength of ſin is a leading part. The breach of the law, as a rule of obedience, is egregiouſly aggravated, where freedom from the law, as a covenant, is proclaimed through Chriſt. The ſum of the moral law is love, the ſum of diſobedience is enmity; but, alas! how is enmity againſt God heightened, when God manifeſts ſuch love, grace, and good-will towards ſinners! Enmity againſt God, under the goſpel, is enmity indeed: it is rendering him enmity for love. Oh! how do the offers of mercy heighten our malignity! And, what a dreadful and dangerous thing is it to live in ſin, under the diſpenſation of grace! An evil heart of unbelief, neglecting the goſpel, and ſo the great ſalvation tendered therein, is the ſpring of apoſtacy, and departing from the living God. You will ſay, Ah! I have a wicked heart, a wandering heart, a vain heart, a looſe heart, a black heart; yea, but the worſt thing about it *is, that it is* an unbelieving heart: for your unbelief

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keeps you under the curſe of the law, and the law-curſe keeps you under ſin's power.

6. Is the law of works the ſtrength of ſin? Then ſee the neceſſity of union to Chriſt, as the end of the law for righteouſneſs, in order to freedom from the ſtrength of ſin. If Chriſt be the righteouſneſs of any, he is their ſtrength alſo; and, becauſe he is their righteouſneſs, he is their ſtrength, and both in a way of union to him: *Surely ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xlv. 24. See alſo, 1 Cor. i. 30. *Of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us righteouſneſs and ſanctification.* It is the character of believers in Chriſt, that they walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1. 4. Now, how comes this ſanctification of heart and way, and freedom from the ſtrength of ſin to take place? Why, the root of it is, the righteouſneſs of the law is fulfilled in them, by virtue of their union with Chriſt. The weakeſt ſaint in Chriſt hath perfectly ſatisfied every demand of the law; he hath completely paid every penny of debt that he owed to the law. Why, being united to Chriſt, they are like man and wife; as man and wife are one fleſh, ſo Chriſt and believers are one Spirit: and as man and wife are one perſon in law; ſo, Chriſt having perfectly fulfilled the law, the believer hath perfectly fulfilled it in him. And ſo the righteouſneſs of the law being fulfilled in the believer, the commanding and condemning ſtrength of ſin, derived from the law, is broken; and conſequently he is in caſe to walk ſpiritually, and to evidence his freedom from the law, as a covenant, and his being a perfect fulfiller of it, by his walking not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.

7. Hence ſee, That juſtification is the root of ſanctification, and juſtifying faith the root of a holy life, and is neceſſary, in order of nature, before it; ſeeing, as there is no conformity to the law, as a rule of holineſs, till once the perſon get freedom from the law, as a covenant, which, to the tranſgreſſor, is the ſtrength of ſin; ſo, in juſtification, the believer being no more reputed a breaker, or tranſgreſſor, but a perfect fulfiller

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of the law of works, it ceaſes to be any more the ſtrength of ſin unto him: whereupon the removal of the ſtrength of ſin lays a foundation for a life of holineſs, both habitual and actual; habitual, conſiſting in the immediate principles of action, in contradiſtinction from the remote principle infuſed in regeneration; and actual ſanctification whether privately, in the mortifying or killing of ſin; or poſitively, in the quickening of the ſoul to a newneſs of life; and that both internal, in the exerciſe of grace; and external, in the performance of duty. And hence, as juſtifying faith is ſaid to have a purifying virtue, Acts xv. 9.; ſo the whole life of the believer is ſaid to be by faith in the juſtifying righteouſneſs of God, revealed in the goſpel, Rom. i. 17. On which account, the goſpel is ſaid to be the power of God to ſalvation, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek; for therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The juſt ſhall live by faith;* that is, faith in this righteouſneſs of God. No man, therefore, can live a holy life, or walk abroad in the duties of the law, as a rule, in a courſe of ſanctification, till once his feet be looſed from the fetters, and his ſoul liberated from the priſon of the law, as a covenant, through juſtification by faith; and then, and not till then, is he in caſe to live a holy life by faith: yea, were he never ſo juſt and righteous, in reſpect of perſonal imparted righteouſneſs; yet he cannot live, but by the faith of this imputed righteouſneſs of God: renewed acts of faith thereupon tend to quicken his ſoul from time to time. The juſt, even the juſt, ſhall live by this faith; for, without it, all his own juſtneſs, righteouſneſs, and perſonal holineſs would languiſh, and die, and give up the ghoſt. What makes the obedience of a multitude of profeſſors vain and unacceptable; yea, and all their duties ſinful and hurtful? Why,' they begin to yield obedience to the precepts of the law, by doing and working out a righteouſneſs of their own, before they be delivered from the curſe of the law, by believing and laying hold on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and hence, the ſtrength of ſin being a grand part of the curſe of the law, and they not being *delivered from* that curſe, all they can do is curſed of God,

God, becauſe the ſtrength of ſin remains. But, ſay you, may not this diſcourage profeſſors from obedience? No: it only directs them to the right and acceptable obedience, and not to dream that they ſhall ever yield any acceptable obedience to the precept of the law, as a rule, till they be delivered from the curſe of the law, as a covenant; and conſequently, that their firſt duty is to come to Chriſt, as the end of the law for righteouſneſs; and then, being delivered from the ſtrength of ſin, they ſhall be in caſe to perform duties of obedience acceptably.

8. Hence ſee, That the fruit of Chriſt's merit, and the fruit of his power go together: for, as a being under the law, and under the ſtrength of ſin, go together; ſo freedom from the law, through the law-biding righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and freedom from the ſtrength of ſin, go together: ſo that the fruit of Chriſt's merit and righteouſneſs, imputed for freeing a man from the law of works, and the fruit of his power exerted in freeing a man from the commanding, as well as the condemning power of ſin, go hand in hand together. It is worth our notice, my friends, that there is a fruit of the merit of Chriſt's death and reſurrection, and that fruit is called redemption and juſtification; and there is alſo a fruit of the power of Chriſt's death and reſurrection, and that is called likeneſs and conformity, Rom. vi. 5.: and theſe two go together. The fruit of the merit and righteouſneſs of Chriſt in his doing and dying, is never reaped by any ſoul, without the fruit of the power thereof alſo, which is the heart's being moulded to a conformity to his death and reſurrection, by dying to ſin, and ariſing again to newneſs of life. Now, there is a twofold ſtruggle and oppoſition in every heart by nature againſt both theſe two things: there is a ſtruggle againſt the merit and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and that is by ſelf-righteouſneſs, which cannot endure to be ſhut out of doors: and there is a ſtruggle againſt the power of Chriſt's death, and that is by luſts and corruptions, which cannot endure to loſe their ſtrength, rule, and dominion. But, whenever the merit of Chriſt, and

his

his righteouſneſs, is effectually applied, for ſhutting ſelf-righteouſneſs out of doors, there alſo the power of Chriſt is effectually exerted, for pulling ſin and corruption down from its throne and dominion, and diveſting it of its ruling power and ſtrength. Hence, true faith cloſes with Chriſt both for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. As true obedience is called univerſal obedience, having a reſpect to all God's commandments; ſo, true faith is an univerſal faith, having a reſpect to all the offices of Chriſt and to all the capacities wherein he is held forth. It receives a whole Chriſt, without exception either of his righteouſneſs or ſtrength, merit or Spirit. Some have but a partial faith, reliſhing Chriſt only for freedom from the wrath of God, and not alſo for freedom from the power of ſin: this is an evidence of a rotten heart; for true believers prize Chriſt, not only as a Surety, for paying their debt, but alſo as a Root, for feeding them with the ſap of ſpiritual life, as a root feeds the branches; and they reliſh Chriſt, not only as one that appeaſes God's wrath, but one that purifies the ſoul from ſin. To this purpoſe, read Exod. xxiv. 6. 8. "And Moſes took half of the blood, and put it in baſons, and half of the blood he ſprinkled on the altar. And then took the blood and ſprinkled it on the people, and ſaid, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all theſe words." There you ſee that the blood of the covenant, part of it was ſprinkled on the altar, and part of it on the people: the blood was, as it were, divided two ways, ſignifying that the blood of Chriſt works partly upward, for pacifying the wrath and ſatisfying the juſtice of God, in paying the ranſom and price for loſt ſouls; and partly downward upon the people, for ſanctifying, ſprinkling, cleanſing, and purifying them, that their defiled ſouls may be made clean.

9. Hence, if the law be the ſtrength of ſin, we may ſee what it is that hinders the ſucceſs of the goſpel for pulling down the ſtrength of ſin. Why, the law ſtands in the way of every natural man, his not ſubmitting to Chriſt offered in the goſpel. The fig-leaf covering of ſelf-righteouſneſs hinders men from putting on the white robe,

robe, the glorious garment of Chriſt's righteouſneſs. As the ſpider hath a web, and the ſnail hath a ſhell, and theſe are their ſtrong holds; ſo every man hath his ſtrong hold that he flees unto for ſhelter, and ſomething that his heart ſets up as a ladder, by which he hopes to be ſaved, and climb up to heaven: and though the law be a broken ladder, and Chriſt alone the true Jacob's ladder, that reacheth from earth to heaven, and which the goſpel points at; yet the man will not quit the broken ladder, the law of works; and, the more they climb that ladder, the further they go away from Chriſt. Hence the greateſt zealots for the law are the greateſt enemies of Chriſt: witneſs, Paul before his converſion; he was one of the beſt men for his righteouſneſs in the law; and yet one of the worſt men we read of for his oppoſition to Chriſt. Think it not ſtrange, Sirs, to ſee ſome very grave, ſober, moral, and devout perſons, and touching the law blameleſs and innocent outwardly, and yet theſe very perſons, heart-enemies to Chriſt, and violent oppoſers of the goſpel: why, even like Paul, the beſt legal man may be the worſt goſpel man; and hence the Gentile is brought in before the Jews, Rom. ix. 26. yea, the publicans and harlots before the ſelf-righteous Phariſees, Mat. xxi. 31. But you would conſider, that it is not merely theſe that are by profeſſion and outward practice zealous for the law, that are the only oppoſers of the goſpel; but there is an underhand dealing with the law, that marrs alſo the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and that by two ſorts of perſons, which are not ſuſpected to be in ſuch friendſhip with the law of works, namely, 1. Profeſt breakers of the law. 2. Profeſt believers of the goſpel.

(1.) There are profeſt breakers of the law; I mean, profane, wicked, and ungodly perſons, who declare their ſin as Sodom, and are in a manner profeſſors of profanity, drunkenneſs, whoredom, ſwearing, Sabbath-breaking, and debauchery; being graceleſs, prayerleſs, godleſs perſons, with a witneſs, that have no regard to the law as a rule of life, yet we will find they have an underhand dealing with the law, and a natural regard to it, as a condition of life, or covenant of works, and there-

thereupon reject the gospel. Now, their regard to the law, as a covenant, appears, partly, when they are inwardly challenged by conscience; and partly, when they are outwardly challenged by men for their sin: when inwardly challenged by conscience, if at any time it be awakened, why then, they flee to the law for relief, saying with themselves, Oh! I hope, I will be a better man before I die; I will take up myself, and turn a new leaf: and so they build upon the law of works, hoping they will do something that they may obtain life by, and saying in effect, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;" and thus they reject Christ, the Surety of the better testament. Or, if such meet with no inward checks, and have no challenges inwardly for their sin; yet their zeal for the law will sometimes appear, when outwardly challenged by men; why, the profane swearer either takes the reproof with a jest, and laughs it over; or, if he find the reprover in sad earnest with him, then he will fall a justifying himself upon a law-bottom; Why, says he, what take you me to be? do you think that I am an atheist or an infidel? Nay, whatever be my faults, I was never such an ill man as you take me to be; and, therefore, I hope in God that he will have mercy on me. What is this but the profane breaker of the law, underhand, building his hope of mercy upon the law, as a covenant, to the greatest dishonour of the law, and contempt of Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, and hereupon living in the open neglect of the great salvation offered in the gospel?

(2.) There are professt believers of the gospel, that yet have underhand dealing with the law for righteousness, to the neglect of the gospel, which yet they profess to believe, insomuch, that Christ is but a stumbling-block to them: such were the Jews, Rom. ix. 31, 32. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness: Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." These words, *as it were*, are of great significancy, shewing, that they did not profess to seek righteousness by *the law, or by* their own works, but by Christ, the promised

miſed Meſſias, to whom they were directed by their ſacrifices that typified him, and by the Old-teſtament prophecies and promiſes that pointed him out: but while they profeſt Chriſt the Meſſias, and faith in him for righteouſneſs; yet they cloſely and underhand, purſued their own righteouſneſs, ſeeking life and ſalvation, not profeſſedly and directly, but *as it were*, by the works of the law, and ſecretly reſted in the law and the works thereof, and ſo miſcarried; and this was their ſtumbling ſtone, under a bright profeſſion that they made to the contrary. Thus many profeſs the doctrine of juſtification by faith, and not by the works of the law; yet ſecretly and underhand cloſely purſue and go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, if not directly, yet, *as it were*, by the works of the law; laying more ſtreſs, for example, upon what they call their ſincere heart, ſincere obedience, ſincere endeavours, than ever they did upon the perfect obedience of Chriſt for juſtification. But whether a bottle be ſtopt with gold or dung, yet being full, whatever water you pour upon it, it will all run aſide: even ſo, the water of life, freely diſpenſed in the goſpel, runs aſide like water ſpilt upon the ground, becauſe men's hearts are ſtopt with the law, their own legal righteouſneſs, which they eſteem as gold; but Paul compares it to dung: Chriſt can get no admittance, becauſe the ſoul is full already. But then,

10. If the ſtrength of ſin be the law, hence we may ſee, That the law can never pacify the duly awakened conſcience; and that ſo far is any man from being able to ſtand before God, in the beſt of his own righteouſneſs, that he cannot ſo much as ſtand before his own conſcience in the beſt righteouſneſs of his own. Some go to the law for ſatisfaction to their conſcience; they rock and lull their conſciences aſleep in the cradle of ſome outward duty; they go to church, and attend ſome ordinances; they ſay ſome formal prayers; and others go greater lengths, merely to gratify conſcience: but if conſcience were duly awakened and convinced, it would not be pacified with any thing leſs than that which pacifies infinite juſtice; nor would it be ſatisfied with any thing leſs than that which fully ſatisfies the law: ſo long

as the law finds any fault with or defect in our righteouſneſs, ſo long does it curſe us, Gal. iii. 10.; and ſo long as the curſe remains, the ſtrength of ſin remains: and conſequently the law cannot give relief to the awakened conſcience by any the beſt righteouſneſs of our own, whether of inward graces, or outward duties; for the awakened conſcience will witneſs againſt us, judge and condemn us, in the beſt of theſe.

(1.) Suppoſe you have inward graces and good qualifications, the beſt of theſe will not give conſcience peace when God awakens it: I ſhall ſuppoſe you have faith; well, but have you not unbelief alſo, and more unbelief than faith? And may not conſcience condemn you for that, as Chriſt did his diſciples, "How is it that ye have no faith," while you carry in many caſes as if you had none at all? Suppoſe you have repentance, yet have you not impenitency alſo? May not conſcience condemn you many times for a hard impenitent heart; ſo hardened from God's fear, that neither the word nor rod of God does make impreſſion on you; yea, neither mercies nor judgments do you lay to heart as you ought? Suppoſe you have humility; yet is there not pride alſo in your heart? and may not your conſcience accuſe you of much ſelf-elevation, and ſelf-confidence? Suppoſe you have love to God; yet, have you not much enmity alſo? and may not your conſcience condemn you, that you love not God with all your heart, with all your ſoul, mind, and ſtrength; and that your heart goes more out after the creature than the Creator, at leaſt ſome times, and in many inſtances? Suppoſe you have ſincerity; yet, may not conſcience witneſs againſt you, that your ſincerity is mixed with hypocriſy? Suppoſe you have zeal; yet, will not conſcience witneſs that you have too much lukewarmneſs? Suppoſe you have a fixed heart upon God, and Chriſt, and heavenly things at ſome times; yet, will not conſcience accuſe you of innumerable wanderings of heart? Why, then it ſeems your beſt righteouſneſs even of inward graces will not pacify conſcience. Nor,

(2.) Suppoſe you have outward duties to add to your *inward graces*; ſuppoſe you pray in your cloſet, in your family,

family, and in public, which is well done; and ſuppoſe you hear the word carefully, and joyfully, and perform all other duties: yet, will not conſcience witneſs that ſin mixes itſelf with your beſt duties? And when you pray, yet you are not always praying in the Holy Ghoſt; when you worſhip, yet you are not ſtill worſhipping God in the Spirit; when you hear, you are not always hearing in faith; when you receive the word and ſacraments, you are not ay receiving Chriſt therein; and when you communicate, you are not ay communicating worthily: may not conſcience condemn you for theſe things, and put you to cry after all, *Lord, be merciful to me a ſinner?*

Well then, when you cannot ſtand before your own conſciences, in your beſt righteouſneſs, either of internal qualifications or external performances; how can you think to ſtand before God, who is greater than conſcience, and knows all things, and ſees more ſin and wickedneſs in you than ever you ſaw? He ſees the errors you cannot ſee, Pſalm xix. 12. "Who can underſtand his errors?" and the heart's wickedneſs you cannot diſcern, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord ſearch the heart, and try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Now, O man, woman, if you cannot ſtand before the bar of your own heart and conſcience, but you muſt be condemned, though it knows not the thouſandth part of your heart-wickedneſs that God knows; how will you ſtand before the bar of God, whoſe underſtanding is infinite, and who is of glorious holineſs and dreadful juſtice? Oh! his fiery law will burn up all your filthy rags, if you have not another covering, when death, judgment, and eternity ſtare you in the face! Is it not your duty and intereſt then, to ſeek after a better robe, even that of Chriſt's everlaſting, law-biding righteouſneſs? that alone can pacify conſcience, becauſe it gives the law all its demands, and quenches the fire of it with his blood. O ſeek then to be under this covert of the blood of the Lamb of God, that purple-covering of the new-covenant chariot, that is paved with love for the daughters of Jeruſalem.

11. Hence ſee, why it is that ſin hath a reigning power over the ungodly, and a prevailing power over the godly; even becauſe the former are wholly under the law, and the latter partly under it. On the one hand, ſin reigns over unbelievers, becauſe they are under the law: men being in bondage to the law, are in bondage to their luſt. Whence is it that all manner of ſin and profaneneſs rages in our day, and ſo much practical oppoſition to the law, as a rule of holineſs? Even becauſe, people being under the law, as a covenant of works, the goſpel is ſlighted and diſparaged; grace, in effect, is cried down, and the law is cried up in oppoſition to it: therefore God leaves men to all lawleſs impiety, as a righteous puniſhment of their contemning of grace, by which alone the law can be honoured, both as a covenant and a rule, Iſa. xlii. 21. Mat. v. 17. Rom. iii. 31.—On the other hand, why does ſin prevail ſo much over believers? why are they ſo unholy and untender in their walk? Even becauſe they are partly under the law. It is true, they are not under the law, but under grace: in point of right, the law of works hath no authority over them; but yet, in point of poſſeſſion, it maintains a great ſway, while unbelief remains; and hence, though ſin hath no rightful legal dominion over them, yet it continues to have great actual prevalence, while they do not make uſe of that grace they are under, Rom. vi. 14. When they let the grace of God out of their mind, then they are diſcouraged, and ſin gets advantage: they are apt to truſt partly to their own works, and endeavours, and frames; and therefore, like the woman with the bloody iſſue, they loſe both their time and pains, and ſpend all on phyſicians that do them no good, till they come back to Chriſt and grace again. Sometimes even believers, inſtead of uſing grace aright, are ready to miſuſe it, and make it a cover for ſloth, under pretence that Chriſt muſt do all. They are thus in danger of practical Antinomianiſm, and turning the grace of God into wantonneſs: they pray not, watch not, and therefore they have nothing, becauſe their hands refuſe to labour; and they do not ſtudy, in all appointed *means,* to keep themſelves under the droppings of

grace,

grace, which would make their duties their pleaſure; but, being under much legal bondage, it makes their duties their burden, and a wearifome taſk; which being thereupon ſhifted and ſlighted, ſin gets advantage. But, Oh! if believers did but believe their privileges, and rightly uſe the grace they are under, it were impoſſible for them to be long under the feet of their enemies. If they by faith were reckoning themſelves to be what they are, according to Rom. vi. 11. "Likewiſe reckon ye yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord;" what a happy and holy life would the believer have, if by faith he were reckoning himſelf to be in Chriſt? For he ſhould not conceive of God out of Chriſt, nor of himſelf out of Chriſt, nor of Chriſt and himſelf as two, but as one myſtical perſon, by virtue of the myſtical ſpiritual union betwixt Chriſt and him. If he were reckoning that he is a member of Chriſt, and can do all things through him; and reckoning that Chriſt is in him, and he is in Chriſt; reckoning that he is dead in Chriſt unto ſin, and alive in Chriſt unto God; how would his ſpirit be raiſed, elevated, and nobilitated to the life of religion, looking to himſelf, not in himſelf, but in Chriſt, by virtue of marriage to him?

If the believer were ſaying, by faith, O! I am complete in Chriſt; I am perfectly righteous in Chriſt, and accepted as righteous in the ſight of God, only through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; I was once bound to the fiery law, the terrible law, and thouſands in hell are paying that debt of ſatisfaction to it, and cannot pay it to eternity; but I have paid every farthing, and the law can aſk no more; yea, in Chriſt, I have magnified the law, and made it honourable: Here is one of the greateſt myſteries in the world, behold a man who ſees himſelf ſo ſinful, that he thinks none in all the world ſo black, and ugly, and ſinful as he, can, in this reſpect, reckon himſelf as righteous as Abraham or Paul; yea, perfectly righteous; and ſee himſelf in that goſpel-glaſs, that ſays, *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no ſpot in thee.* Why, the believer being clothed with the Sun of righteouſneſs,

he is righteous in the ſight of God: to be righteous in man's ſight is nothing to this, hypocrites may arrive at that; but to be righteous in God's ſight, is to be ſo righteous, that infinite holineſs, infinite juſtice can find no blot, no ſpot, no hole, in the garment of righteouſneſs with which the man is clothed. O believers in Chriſt, you that are perfect through his comelineſs, you do not view ſufficiently your privileges, otherwiſe it would elevate you above corruption, and fill you with holy triumph over all your luſts and idols, and make you think ſhame to ſin; if you were reckoning what you are in Chriſt, you would reckon it below you to tread in the dirty ſteps of the world: but when unbelief darkens your goſpel-privileges, and grace is out of view, you faint in duty, and are diſcouraged and diſheartened in your work, ſo as ſin recovers its ſpirit and ſtrength.

12. Hence we may ſee, that whatever oppoſition and reſiſtence to ſin, hypocrites and unbelievers may make, yet ſtill they are *under* the ſtrength of ſin, becauſe *under* the law; and whatever prevalence ſin may have over believers, yet they are *freed* from the ſtrength of ſin, becauſe they are *not* under the law. This twofold inference lays a foundation for reſolving two difficult caſes.

Firſt Caſe is, Seeing hypocrites may *reſiſt* ſin, what reſiſtance of ſin is conſiſtent with the *dominion* thereof? Hypocrites and reprobates do not always ſin peaceably but with ſome reluctancy; they forbear many ſins, and get victory over them: how then may this be cleared? and how does it appear that they may make reſiſtance againſt ſin, and yet the ſtrength of it never broken?

I anſwer, for clearing this, in theſe two aſſertions.

(1.) The firſt aſſertion is, That there is indeed a reſiſting of ſin, which is conſiſtent with the power and dominion of it; as I would clear in a few words. A perſon may ſolemnly reſolve and ſwear againſt ſin, and yet be under the power of it; as it was with Iſrael, Pſal. lxxviii. 37. and Joſh. xxiv. 18. People may confeſs their ſins, and repent of them with tears; as Eſau, and Judas, and *Saul, Heb.* xii. 17. Matth. xxvii. 3, 4, 5. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16.

16, 17. and yet be under the power of it. People may ſeparate ſome time for ſpecial faſting and humiliation, on the account of ſin, and yet be under the power of it; as Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 29. People may be zealous oppoſers and reformers of ſin in others, and yet be under the reigning power of it; like Jehu, 2 Kings x. 1,—31. People may reſiſt ſin unto ſuffering and blood; as Alexander, mentioned, Acts xix. 33. and 1 Tim. i. 19. People may reſiſt all motions, inclinations, and temptations to ſin, ſo far as never to break forth into any groſs out-breaking thereof, and be in all things blameleſs before the world; as Paul was before his converſion, Phil. iii. 9. And yet all this while they may be under the power and dominion of ſin: Why? becauſe their reſiſtance of ſin proceeds from wrong principles; ſuch as fear of God's judgments, as Ahab, when Elijah threatened him; fear of man, like Herod; affectation of human applauſe, like the Phariſees; and becauſe their reſiſtance is but partial, chiefly bended againſt groſs out-breakings, while heart-luſts are welcomed and entertained; the out-ſide of the cup being clean, while within it is full of corruption, Matth. xxiii. 24.—Thus, I ſay, there is a reſiſting of ſin that is conſiſtent with the power of it.

2. The ſecond aſſertion is, That the power of ſin is never broken in a hypocrite; why, becauſe the nature of an hypocrite, the reigning ſin, which is the ſin of nature, and which gives life and breath to all his other ſins, is never diſcovered, never groaned under; though ſome actual ſins get a ſtreak, yet this remains in power: and hence, the oppoſition that a hypocrite or graceleſs man finds in himſelf ſometimes to ſin, is not the oppoſition of the Spirit to the fleſh, but rather the oppoſition of one ſin to another: As if two noblemen ſtrive together in a kingdom, the king's power is never a whit weakened thereby, he rules abſolutely notwithſtanding; ſo two ſins may caſt out with one-another, and yet the reigning ſin, which is the ſin of nature, remain in power: hence a man's pride and prodigality will differ with his avarice and covetouſneſs; a man's ſelf-love may diſcord *with his ſloth*, and put him upon ſeveral duties.

Though one ſin contend with and caſt out another ſin, it will not ſay that ſin is exauctorate: the ſin that prevails, will yet do homage to the reigning ſin; but while the reigning ſin remains untouched, ſin hath dominion and power. The taking of a few villages does not much weaken the ſtrength of a king; but when his royal city is taken, and himſelf confined, then his power is gone: even ſo here, the forbearing, reſiſting, and down-bringing of ſome ſins, does much abate the power of ſin; but if once the reigning ſin of the nature be taken, then the power of ſin is gone. Now, Chriſt gives the body of death in every ſaint a deadly wound; he does not only bruiſe Satan's heel, but his head: when a man comes to ſee his wicked nature, his oppoſition to God and Chriſt, and all his ways in every thing, and mourns for this as the greateſt evil, and comes to the Lord Jeſus, and employs him for power againſt it, and renounces its dominion; though he cannot rid himſelf altogether thereof, yet then is the power of it broken and gone. But here notice further, The permiſſion to do ſome duties, and to leave off ſome ſins, does not evince that the power of ſin is broken, becauſe this may be done with ſin's authority and conſent; yea, and with Satan's leave: for if the devil ſee that Chriſt is like to get a profane ſoul from him, and that the man is like to break off from him, he compones, he ſuffers him to leave many ſins, and to do many good duties: as a man that hath no will to quit his lands, he pays a compoſition for it; ſo ſin makes a compoſition with many, whereas it reigns over ſome very abſolutely, yet it reigns over others ſo as to permit them to pay ſome acknowledgement to God, and yet ſin ſtill reigns. Many a man's conſcience is awakened for ſin; they confeſs and mourn for it, they ſeek pardon, and yet keep their ſins ſtill, and hold them faſt: many will tipple and drink, and live in covetouſneſs, and ſloth, and unbelief; O but their deſires are good; they pray privately and in their families, and confeſs their ſins, and are ſorry for them! What is this? Alas! this is nothing but the compoſition made betwixt Satan and you: you ſtill hold of ſin, and *it reigns ſtill;* even as your lands hold of ſuch a perſon

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of quality, it may be of the king, or of a nobleman: well, ſome lands are under greater ſervitude to the king, or other ſuperiors, than others; yet all hold of them: ſo, perhaps your ſlavery to ſin is not ſo great as that of others, but yet you hold of ſin; ſin is your ſuperior, and it hath the power. So, ſome miniſters in the late times, after the king's * ſupremacy was eſtabliſhed, when the king found and apprehended many to be diſſatisfied with his abſolute government, he offered and they accepted of an indulgence from him, giving them leave to preach in ſuch and ſuch places and circumſtances: this acceptance, many maintained, was ſuch a ſin, as that thereby they did hold their miniſtry of the king, and homologate or approve of his ſupremacy in matters ſacred as well as civil; or that the king was ſtill ſupreme over all cauſes, as well as perſons: ſo it is here; ſin perceiving that many begin to entertain a great diſſatisfaction with ſuch an abſolute form of government, or ruling in ſuch a manner, reſolve to alter their method and way of living, and to offer indulgencies: perhaps, Satan ruled before in a way of drunkenneſs, ſwearing, whoredom, and profanity; but now he will rule by pride, formality, covetouſneſs, and ſetting up of mens own righteouſneſs: here is an indulgence offered and accepted; it is no change of government in the ſubſtantials of it, it is no change of the power of ſin, only ſome are indulged to do more than others. Sin and Satan indulge ſome to do many things, while ſin is ſtill king, only it rules in a different manner.—Thus, I ſay, that the power of ſin is never broken in hypocrites, as it is in the believer who is under grace.

The Second Caſe was, In what reſpects are believers freed from the *ſtrength* of ſin, while yet they are ſenſible of the *prevalency* thereof? For ſin remains in them, and acts, and works, and ſtrives in them, and they are led captive thereby, Rom. vii. 23. Therefore, though they be not under the law, but under grace, it would

* *Viz.* CHARLES II. The Supremacy was eſtabliſhed by the Parliament, 1661. And the Indulgence granted by the Privy-Council, 1669.

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ſeem that they are not freed from the power, dominion, and ſtrength of ſin; for the ſtrength of ſin is what they daily feel and complain of: how then, and in what reſpects, are they freed from it?

ANSW. There are theſe following reſpects, wherein the believer is freed from the ſtrength of ſin.

(1.) In ſo far as they are under grace, it is ſure they are not under ſin's power. Indeed, if believers would take hold of the ſhield of faith, they would find little of the power of ſin; but they many times caſt this ſhield away by diſcouragements, and run in to the law thro' unbelief, and ſo they ſink: hence, caſting themſelves out, as ſaints may do for a ſtart, from under the influence of grace, they may, like Peter, begin to ſink, becauſe they begin to fear and doubt; ſo that it is true thus far, namely, ſo far as they are under grace, and through grace keep themſelves under the influence of grace, they are not under the power and dominion of ſin.

(2.) Believers are freed from the power of ſin, in ſo far as they are intitled to the promiſe, which ſays, Their ſin ſhall be ſubdued, and that ſin ſhall not have dominion. It is to be noticed, that it is not ſaid in the context, ſin hath NO dominion or power over them, but it is ſaid, It ſhall NOT have dominion: now, in regard the time is coming, when all ſin ſhall be taken away, in all theſe that are under grace; its power and dominion is to be cut off, though for a while it rages. There is a counſel and determination againſt Babylon; God hath decreed and ordered, that ſin's dominion ſhall expire, Rom. xvi. 20. "The God of peace will bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly;" and he will turn judgment unto victory; but how long the believer may fight and groan under the prevalence of it, cannot eaſily be determined.

(3.) Believers that are under grace, are freed from the power of ſin, in regard it hath no righteous and lawful power and dominion over them; the firſt huſband is dead, and they are married to Chriſt, the ſecond Huſband, Rom. vii. 4.; and therefore they are not debtors *to the fleſh to* live after it, Rom. viii. 12. Though the

fleſh

fleſh may compel and crave them to obey, yet it has no juſt power ſo to do. Sin's juſt authority is exauctorate; and Chriſt, by ſatisfying the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, hath condemned ſin, Rom. viii. 3. So that it being now condemned and exauctorate, though it keep poſſeſſion, yet there is a ſentence and decreet of ejection obtained againſt ſin. The believer hath law upon his ſide, whereas ſin hath no law, no right concerning him. Sin hath a ſort of right to reign in wicked men, and theſe that are under the law; for it hath a right of conqueſt over them, and they are ſervants, becauſe, by their actual obedience, they have homologate the right of conqueſt that ſin had: but in believers, who are under grace, and delivered from ſin by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſatisfied the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, and now renouncing the ſervice of ſin, and taking on with Chriſt as their Lord, who redeemed them by his blood from ſin, and overcame and condemned ſin, ſin hath no pretext of title any more. It is true, it actually exerciſes authority: yet that is but an uſurped authority: ſin rules by no lawful title. You will ſay, If ſin rule, what is the matter whether it hath a title or not? I anſwer, Yea, it is a great matter; for the juſt Lord of heaven and earth, upon the believer's complaining of unjuſt oppreſſion, will right him, and deliver him from ſuch an oppreſſion and oppreſſor in due time: and he hath encouragement, in oppoſing ſin, that he ſhall prevail, ſeeing his cauſe is juſt, and that he hath juſt matter of pleading with the righteous God, that ſin ſhall not have power over him. The believer may go to God, as Bathſheba did to David, when Adonijah did uſurp the kingdom, ſaying, "My Lord, O King, did thou not ſwear, ſaying, Aſſuredly Solomon ſhall reign? and yet, behold, Adonijah reigneth." So may the believer go to God, and ſay, Lord, haſt thou not ſaid that ſin ſhall not reign, but that grace ſhall reign? And, yet behold, ſin and corruption uſurp the power: and, to be ſure, he will take order with this matter.

(4.) Believers, that are under grace, are freed from the power of ſin, in regard ſin hath no power to condemn

or damn ſuch as are under grace; its authority is ſo far broken in them, that though they ſin, and though ſin may force them to ſome acts of obedience to it, yet it cannot condemn them to hell, as it may do theſe that are ſtrangers to Chriſt, and not under grace, in whom ſin is ſaid to reign unto death, Rom. v. 21. and chap. vi. 23. Now, whatever way it may reign and rule, yet it reigns not unto death in them that are under grace, and in Chriſt; for, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt;* and againſt ſuch there is no law, Gal. v. 23. As when the Romans conquered the Jews, though they left ſome authority, yet they took from them the power of life and death, as they acknowledge, John xviii. 32. *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:* ſo, when Chriſt hath conquered ſin, though he did in his wiſdom not altogether deſtroy the power of ſin, yet he took away the power of life and death from it, ſo as ſin cannot now condemn any believer; and this is a comfortable privilege.

(5.) Believers under grace are freed from ſin, in regard they have renounced the dominion thereof, and their allegiance thereto; hence that word, 2 Cor. iv. 2. *We have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty.* Why, by cloſing and engaging with Chriſt to be his, and coming to him for protection from, and power againſt ſin, they have declared that they renounce ſin, and all allegiance thereto. Chriſt hath engaged all his ſervants in heart and practice againſt ſin directly and indirectly; there is war declared againſt ſin in all the ſaints. You know, it was a great impairing of Rehoboam's power, 1 Kings xii. 16. when the ten tribes revolted, and ſaid to him, *What portion have we in the ſon of Jeſſe? See to thine own houſe, David; to your tents, O Iſrael;* and ſo ſhook off his authority: whatever therefore ſin does in believers, whatever obedience it extorts from them, or entices them to yield to it, yet there is war irreconcilable denounced againſt ſin. This is a great matter, when a people ſhake off the authority of a prince, and declare themſelves free from his authority; however he be ſeeking to reduce them to obedience again, yet he hath, for *the preſent,* no dominion over them: ſo it is here:

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tho' ſin may endeavour to bring the believer into ſubjection, yet it hath not abſolute ſway over him.

(6.) In regard ſin hath not that power over ſuch as are under grace, as it had formerly before they were under it; for, notwithſtanding that ſin prevails, yet it prevails not as it did before, when the ſtrong man kept all his goods in peace, 2 Pet. iv. 4. They run not to the ſame exceſs of riot: there is ſome more in them that oppoſes ſin; and ſin does not rule ſo abſolutely and peaceably in them as it does in theſe that are under the law. Formerly the ſtrong man kept all in peace, while the man committed ſin with greedineſs; but now there are always proteſtations and upriſings againſt it: ſin hath not abſolute, peaceable, and voluntary dominion.

(7.) Believers under grace are freed from ſin, in regard ſin, in its principal deſign, is broken; its chief ſtrength is taken away: as when two great parties are competing and ſtriving with one another, there is a fort or principal city of the kingdom; and whoſoever of them can make themſelves maſter of that, they are fair to carry the whole kingdom; therefore both ſtrive to gain it, and he that firſt gains it, has much weakened his enemy's power: ſo it is here, the great deſign of ſin and Satan is to keep the ſoul from cloſing with Chriſt; he hides their need of Chriſt from them ſo long as he can; and when they come to ſee their need of Chriſt, he ſeeks to comfort and ſalve them by the law, or by their legal endeavours: when this miſcarries with him, then, by a multitude of objections, he ſcares them from Chriſt; all his forces and might are bent upon this, as his chief and only deſign, to keep the ſoul and Chriſt from joining together; for then he knows he hath loſt them for ever. Now, when the Lord Jeſus, in a day of power, hath ſo far overcome Satan, that he hath broken his chief deſign, and maugre all the oppoſition of the devil and corruption, hath made the ſoul to come to him and believe on him, and ſo hath put the ſoul into a ſtate of reconciliation, life and grace, then he hath very much delivered them from the power of ſin, eſpecially the mother-ſin of unbelief, John xvi. 9.

(8.) In regard that ſin hath got a deadly wound by the power

power of converting grace, of which it never heals again till it totally die. There is such a plot laid in the day of believing and conversion, as sin will certainly be blown up with; having got a death's wound, it will die ere long. Indeed, it may be like a man in a malignant fever, that hath strength of humours, and in whom the strength of nature is overcome; he seems to be very strong, so as three men perhaps cannot get him kept in the bed: yea, all this is but only the raging of his humour, and nature's last attempt; for within a few hours the man dies. So, after sin hath got a death's wound, it may rage for a little, but dies at last: like an ox felled on the forehead with an ax; how does he leap and stamp, and put forth power with violence for a while? but at last falls down and dies. Thus the first draught of the water of life that the soul by faith drinks, proves poison to sin; and, the more of this water that the soul drinks, the more is the power of sin abated; there is a trap laid for sin. You have a word, Obadiah verse 7. *They have laid a wound under thee;* there is a train laid for sin, that cannot fail to be its death. Why, what for a train? why, the believer, by faith, sets all at work against sin; not only prayers and tears, and all means and duties, under the conduct of new-covenant grace; but the special train is the word and promise of Christ; the grace and fulness of Christ; the blood, righteousness, and merit of Christ; the power, grace, and Spirit of Christ; are all employed to knock down sin, and all clapt upon sin's head; so that its power must cease, and it cannot but die.

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SERMONS LXXVII, LXXVIII.*

1 Cor. xv. 56.

—The ſtrength of ſin is the law.

[The fifth and ſixth Sermons on this text.]

MY friends, we need to ſeek ſalvation from ſin, elſewhere than in and by the law, and the works thereof; for the law of God cannot ſave or juſtify the leaſt tranſgreſſor of it, otherwiſe it muſt condemn itſelf, which is impoſſible: *Curſed is every one*, ſays the law, *that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;* and we are obliged to ſay Amen to that curſe, as every way juſt and righteous: *Curſed is he that confirms not all the words of this law, to do them; and all the people ſhall ſay*, Amen, Deut. xxvii. 26. It is the very nature of the law to condemn the leaſt tranſgreſſor of it, whatever after-works of obedience he may perform; for, *Whoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, Jam. ii. 10. Therefore, the higheſt act of obedience, even of the ſaints in heaven, cannot expiate the leaſt breach of God's law, neither can any duty performed, take away the fault of a ſin committed. Sin therefore retains its ſtrength to enſlave, and ſtrength to deſtroy the ſinner, by virtue of the broken law that he is under, ſo long as he hath not wherewith to repair the honour of the law: the honour of the precept of the law muſt be repaired by a perfect obedience, and the honour of the threatening by a complete ſatisfaction, otherwiſe the ſtrength of ſin remains; but, whenever a man is clothed with the obedience and

* Where the two following diſcourſes were delivered is uncertain.

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ſatisfaction of Chriſt, then being reputed no tranſgreſſor, but a perfect keeper and fulfiller of the law, it is no more the ſtrength of ſin in him; for, according to our doctrine from this text, the law of works is the ſtrength of ſin, only to the ſinner, by whom it is broken, not to the believer, by whom it is fulfilled in his glorious Head. * * *

HAVING already, elſewhere, diſcuſſed the doctrinal part, finiſhed the firſt uſe of caution, and deduced twelve inferences for information; there are ſtill many more leſſons may be learned from this doctrine, beſides what I have already deduced; ſuch as,

1. Hence we may ſee the dangerous and damnable influence of legal doctrine, that tends to keep ſinners under the law; for thus they are under the power of ſin. The legal ſtrain, under covert of zeal for the law, hath a native tendency to marr true holineſs, and all acceptable obedience to the law, inſomuch, that the greateſt legaliſt is the greateſt Antinomian, or enemy to the law: the goſpel is ſlighted and diſparaged by many, as if it left men to a lawleſs liberty, and the law is cried up in oppoſition to it; and therefore God leaves men to all lawleſs impieties, as a righteous puniſhment of their contemning of grace, by which alone the ſtrength of ſin can be broken, Rom. vi. 14. Why does the devil, in all generations, oppoſe himſelf ſo much to the goſpel, and to the doctrine of grace, and raiſes up all the calummies in the world againſt it? Even becauſe it is the doctrine of grace that deſtroys his kingdom; for the devil knows, that while men are under the law, they are under his power, and under the power of ſin; therefore he hath no great ill-will at legal doctrine: but if one preach up grace, and nothing but free grace, then he will raiſe a hue after him, as an enemy to the law and holineſs *. Why, what ails the devil at the ſoul? Even becauſe nothing ſpoils his market among ſouls ſo much, as the goſpel, when it comes wtth power; for, it is the goſpel, and not the law, that is the immediate inſtrument of

* The ground of ſuch an accuſation may be ſeen accounted for, *Vol. I. p. 232. Vol. II.* p. 304, 305. 395. Vol. III. p. 44.

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converſion, Gal. iii. 2. and of true holineſs, Tit. ii. 11, 12. And what is it that makes the goſpel the power of God to ſalvation, and the powerful inſtrument of converting ſinners to God? Even becauſe therein is revealed the righteouſneſs of God, from faith to faith, Rom. i. 15. 17. and therein the righteouſneſs of God, without the law, is manifeſted, Rom. iii. 21. What was the reaſon, that, in the beginning of our glorious Reformation ſuch great multitudes were quickened to ſpiritual life, and made fruitful in the ways of God? Why, God raiſed up ſome inſtruments to publiſh and illuſtrate the doctrine of grace, and their preaching wrought wonders, the power of God attending the publication of it; they harped moſt upon this ſtring, to clear the doctrine of juſtification by grace, without the works of the law, and in oppoſition to the damnable doctrine of the church of Rome, which ſets up men's works as the matter of their juſtification: but as all the Reformers harped ſweetly upon the ſtring of grace, ſo this article, ſays Luther, reigns in my heart, "That we are juſtified "freely by grace, through the redemption that is in "Chriſt." But now-a-days, we are become ſo far aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, that as all imaginable methods have been taken to diſparage the preaching of it; ſo ſome, that have but a faint inclination to preach it, are diſcouraged from meddling too much with this theme; and others betake themſelves to a legal ſtrain; or, if they preach grace, it is in ſuch a hampered way, and with ſo many cautions and circumlocutions, as if there were a great danger in preaching free grace, but no danger in preaching the law. Is there need of caution in preaching of CHRIST, and no caution to be uſed in preaching Moſes? I am not againſt ſuitable caution on all hands; but it is to be feared, there will be little revival of a Reformation, till the doctrine of grace vent more freely under the conduct of the Spirit, giving ſuch an appropriating faith and perſuaſion of the free favour, love, and grace of God in Chriſt, as took place in our Reformers days. Whence is it that all manner of ſin and profaneneſs rages in our day? Why, goſpel-light is

either darkened or ſlighted, and men remain under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin.

2. See hence the dreadful corruption and depravation of our nature, and the deplorable condition of ſinners in their natural ſtate, in that the law, which forbids ſin, ſhould be in men the ſtrength of ſin, and ſhould irritate corruption, and ſtir up to more ſin. The law, inſtead of healing that diſeaſe, does increaſe it; as it is ſaid, Hoſea vii. 1. "When I would have healed Iſrael, then the iniquity of Ephraim was diſcovered, and the wickedneſs of Samaria." See alſo Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11. It fares with men under the dominion of the law, as with wolves and dogs, that grow more fierce by their being tied up and confined: and as with a brook, which if not interrupted, runs calmer; but if it be dammed up, then *Supens et fervens, et ab obice ſævior ibit;* "It "ſwells beyond its bounds, and rages and runs down "afterwards the more violently." When the ſun of the law ſhines upon mens dunghill hearts, they bring forth the more noiſom ſmell; hence, tell the unregenerate man of his ſins, he is the more inclined thereto; tell him of his duties, he is the more averſe therefrom: why, whence does this proceed? It even comes to paſs by theſe two means. 1. God is provoked by ſin, to work theſe ſtrange effects upon men, as an angry Judge; he makes the law, which ſhould be their ſouls meat and drink, to be poiſon to them. 2. Becauſe the law is contrary to ſin, therefore ſin is contrary to it; they violently oppoſe each other. If there were no ſin, the law would be pleaſant to them, they would wear it as jewels about their neck, and write it upon the tables of their heart; but now, oh! how oppoſite is the carnal heart to all ſpiritual work! Some ſpeak of their good hearts, and good nature; but, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" any good thing out of a ſinful nature? Naturally we delight in good, juſt as fiſh delight to be out of the water; take a fiſh out of its watery element, and ſo long as it lives it is not quiet, it does nothing but leaps and tumbles up and down; ſo, ſet carnal men upon ſpiritual work, they are out of their element, they cannot *live, cannot* reſt there, Hoſ. vi. 5. Praying and preach-

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ing does, as it were, hew and ſlay, vex and torment them; they are never eaſy till they be in their own element again. That horſe muſt be a froward beaſt, that, the more he is ſpurred forward, the more he runs backward; and a ſtubborn child, that, the more his father injoins him to do a thing, the more he ſets himſelf againſt it: this is the ſtate of every one by nature; men huff and ſnuff at reproof, and cannot endure contradiction. And as our nature is a corrupt and contradicting nature, in oppoſition to the law; ſo it is a heterogeneous and ſelf-contradictory nature: men are, while under the curſe of the law, both under the power of ſin, and under the power of ſelf-righteouſneſs; having a curſed oppoſition to the law as a rule of holineſs, and yet a woeful inclination to be juſtified by the law as a covenant of works, Rom. x. 3.; and, as the expreſſion is, Gal. vi. 21. they deſire to be under the law, to be ſaved by it; and yet they cannot endure to be under it, to be ruled by it. They take occaſion to ſin from the law, Rom. vii. 8.; as ſome evidently do, when they ſcorn their teachers, and turn their preaching into ſcoffing: and yet they take occaſion to boaſt from the law, Rom. ii. 27. as if they were too wiſe to be inſtructed, and too good and righteous to deſpair of life by the law. Thus the law they are under is their ruin, and they know it not. While the commandment never came with power to their effectual conviction, ſin and ſelf remain in their power; and yet of this they are ignorant, that, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.* They perceive not the ſtrength of ſin that they are under, nor the ſtrength of natural corruption, nor the dreadful curſe they are under, becauſe they know not the law they are under, nor perceive it in its ſpirituality and ſeverity, in its mandatory and minatory power, which gives ſin both its commanding and condemning ſtrength.

3. Hence we may ſee the duty of all unbelievers under the power of ſin, namely, to come to Chriſt, and to come under his grace, who is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth, as they would not remain under the yoke of the law, and ſo under the ſtrength of ſin. Oh! what a fearful thing is it to be under the law!

"For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe." Your works can never ſatisfy the law; to attempt this, were to build a caſtle in the air: and, as a ſnow-ball, the more it is rolled, the bigger it grows; ſo, the more you go on to get a righteouſneſs in yourſelf to fulfil the law, the further off you are from it, and the more involved under the curſe, as being a debtor to do the whole law, Gal. v. 3. And, Oh! how dreadful will your ſtate be in a dying hour, and on the brink of eternity, if you have no righteouſneſs that can pleaſe the holineſs, or pacify the juſtice of God! you will have nothing to expect, but to bear the weight of your own ſins for ever, where God will open the treaſures of his fury, and ſhut the bowels of his mercy for ever upon you; and when you have ſuffered millions of years in hell, yet not one mite of a million of your law-debt will be paid! O then, deſpair, abſolutely deſpair of getting any good by the law, whether by your own doing or ſuffering; and ſee the neceſſity of flying to Chriſt, and his doing and ſuffering, knowing that there is no other way of getting both the law and the Law-giver ſatisfied. O happy theſe, who are perſuaded, through grace, to take this way, namely, of coming to Chriſt alone, for deliverance from the law, and ſo from the ſtrength of ſin!

4. Hence we may ſee what is the duty of believers in Chriſt, who are delivered from the law. Surely they ought to give evidence that they are delivered from the ſtrength of ſin, by aſpiring after the ſtrength of grace: for, as it is ſaid of believers, Rom. vi. 14. "Sin ſhall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace;" which ſays, that by their being delivered from the law, they are delivered from the reigning ſtrength of ſin; ſo it is the duty of believers to give evidence that they are not under the law, nor conſequently under the ſtrength of ſin, by aiming at the ſtrength of grace, or the higheſt and nobleſt degrees thereof, in oppoſition to the ſtrength of ſin.

If you aſk, When is it that the ſtrength of grace does appear in a believer?

I ſhall offer ſome inſtances of the ſtrength of grace:

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I ſpeak not now of grace in the fountain, as it is in God, but of grace in the ſtreams, as it ought to ſhine in the believer.

(1.) The firſt inſtance of the ſtrength of grace is when the believer can be high and yet low; high in his attainments, and yet low in his thoughts and apprehenſions of himſelf. Thus Paul was high in gifts, high in graces, high in comforts, high in ſervices, high in ſucceſs, high in manifeſtations, high in many excellent reſpects, and yet low and humble in ſpirit: for, if we take his own verdict of himſelf, he looks on himſelf as the leaſt of all ſaints, the chief of all ſinners, not worthy to be called an apoſtle, as I might inſtance in ſeveral of his epiſtles; yea, he calls himſelf nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 11. And, O how becoming is it for believers to be low and humble amidſt theſe high and eminent graces and attainments! For he that was the higheſt became the loweſt; "Learn of me, ſays Chriſt, for I am meek and lowly in heart:" and yet ſo high, that, in the preceding verſe, he had ſhewed how all things were delivered to him by his Father, Mat. xi. 27, 28, 29. Oh! may not duſt and aſhes bluſh and be aſhamed to be proud, when God humbled himſelf! Oh! for a vile worm to ſwell, when Majesty humbled itſelf!

(2.) The ſecond inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when the believer is low, and yet high; lying low in the duſt before God continually, and yet high and heavenly-minded, according to Col. iii. 1, 2. when the lower he ſinks in ſelf-abaſement, the higher he mounts up as on eagles wings in ſpiritual-mindedneſs and holy loftineſs of heart, looking down with a generous diſdain upon worldly things, that carnal minds are ſo much taken up with.

(3.) The third inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is when a believer is full, and yet empty; full of worldly enjoyments, and yet empty of love to the world; enjoying all manner of temporal good things, and yet able to ſay, as Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I deſire beſide thee?* And with Paul, *I am crucified to the world, and the world to me.* It is an inſtance of great grace, when a man can

ſwim in the ſtreams of creature-enjoyments, and yet ſo as not to forſake the fountain of living waters.

(4.) The fourth inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when the believer is empty, and yet full; empty of all outward worldly enjoyment, and yet full, as having all, by having Chriſt. This is exemplified in Hab. iii. 17, 18. "Tho' the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, nor fruit be found in the vine, &c. yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful in the God of my ſalvation." Thus, when a man having nothing, yet poſſeſſes all things, by ſeeing all in Chriſt, even amidſt outward wants, loſſes, croſſes, and afflictions, then the ſtrength of grace appears.

(5.) The fifth inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when the believer is at eaſe, and yet afflicted; at eaſe in reſpect of outward and inward proſperity, and yet afflicted for the afflictions of God's church and people, laying the church's calamities duly to heart. You have a notable example of this in David, 2 Sam. vii. 1. There you ſee that he ſat in his houſe, and the Lord had given him reſt round about from all his enemies, and thus he was at eaſe, but he ſays to Nathan, "Behold, now I dwell in a houſe of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within curtains," ver. 2. Tho' he was at reſt and eaſe, ſo that his own perſonal intereſt proſpered; yet he was afflicted, becauſe it fared not ſo well with the houſe and intereſt of God. It is choice grace, to be deeply afflicted with the affliction of the church, even when no perſonal affliction takes place.

(6.) The ſixth inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a believer is afflicted, and yet at eaſe; I mean, when he is compaſt about with perſonal affliction, and yet eaſy and quiet, in a holy, humble ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and chearfully acquieſces therein: "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it," ſays the Pſalmiſt. Thus Aaron held his peace, even when God's diſpenſations towards his children were terrible.

(7.) The ſeventh inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when the believer preſſes after the greateſt meaſure of perſonal holineſs and imparted righteouſneſs, and yet *lives wholly* and depends intirely upon an imputed righteouſneſs.

teouſneſs: See a notable example of this in Paul, Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. where he is preſſing after the greateſt degree of holineſs; and yet, ver. 7, 8, 9. he lives and depends only and wholly upon the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for juſtification and acceptance with God.

(8.) The eighth inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a believer can apprehend love in God's heart, even when he ſees nothing but frowns in his face; and when, with Abraham, *Againſt hope he believes in hope*; and ſays, with Job, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* To love a ſmiting God, and truſt in a ſlaying God, or notwithſtanding all his ſlaying diſpenſations, argues great grace; and even when walking in darkneſs, and having no light, then to truſt in the name of the Lord; and when he is calling him a dog, then to draw arguments for his faith out of ſuch a word, and to plead kindneſs on him amidſt all the frowns of his face, and blows of his hand: this is conquering grace.

(9.) The ninth inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when believers ſee a beauty in the ſervice of religion, as well as in the ſweets of it; a beauty in ſpiritual employments, as well as ſpiritual enjoyments; when it is their meat and drink to do their Lord's will, and work his work, as well as enjoy his preſence; and when it is their very life to ſerve the Lord. O but they are come a great length, that can ſay, *To us to live is Chriſt!*

(10.) The tenth inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a man can rejoice in the gifts, graces, and uſefulneſs of others, even when they outſhine his own, and eclipſe him; and when a man can rejoice to ſee the work of God carried on by others, tho' himſelf be laid aſide, and ſhare not in the honour of it. Such eminent grace was in Moſes, when he ſaid, "Envieſt thou for my ſake? would to God all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them," Numb. xi. 29. And ſuch eminent grace was in Paul, when he rejoiced that Chriſt was preached, though with a deſign to cloud and eclipſe him, Phil. i. 18. Some have noticed two things as carrying noble grace in them: the one is, to be willing to be uſed in God's work, without being taken notice of, or having

the honour of it; and the other is, for a man to rejoice to ſee the work of God carried on by others, though he himſelf be laid aſide.

(11.) The eleventh inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a man can ſet the glory of Chriſt above his own intereſt, his own happineſs, his own life and concerns. Moſes and Paul were alſo eminent in this; Moſes content to be blotted out of God's book, and Paul content to be accurſed for Iſrael's ſake: what was this, but as ſome obſerve with reſpect to Moſes, a preferring the glory of God before their own ſalvation, whoſe glory they looked upon as conjoined with Iſrael's preſervation, in reſpect of the promiſes made to the fathers, and in reſpect of the blaſphemy which the Egyptians and adverſaries were ready to belch out againſt God, ſhould he utterly deſtroy them. And again, we find Paul not only willing to be bound, but even to die at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus; Chriſt's honour being dearer to him than his life. O Sirs, it is rare grace for a man to be content that his name be eclipſed, and his honour laid in the duſt, if the name and honour of Chriſt may be advanced thereby; and content to be a footſtool on which Chriſt may aſcend his throne.

(12.) The twelfth inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a man can account no outward adverſity too hard to ſuffer for the name of Chriſt on earth, and no outward proſperity too dear to part with for the enjoyment of Chriſt in heaven: when, on the one hand, he accounts no outward adverſity too hard to ſuffer for the name of Chriſt on earth, and can glory in the croſs of Chriſt; it is ſaid of the diſciples, Acts v. 41. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Chriſt: or, as the words may be read, that they were *honoured to be diſhonoured* for Chriſt. And when, on the other hand, they account no outward proſperity too ſweet, or too dear, to part with for the enjoyment of Chriſt in heaven. If a man be in affliction, adverſity, diſtreſs, ſickneſs, pain, and then be willing to be gone, there is not much here, this may be where there is no grace at all; but when a man enjoys abundance of worldly comforts and contentments, and yet

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longs for heaven and perfect holineſs and happineſs; when, though he may ſay, *It is good to be here*, yet he is ſaying, O it is better to be there, *to be with Chriſt is beſt of all;* and therefore is breathing, with the ſpouſe, Song viii. 14. "Make haſte, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of ſpices:" make haſte to bring me to the place where I ſhall be for ever with the Lord, and ſhall be like him; for I ſhall ſee him as he is: no paradiſe here being like the paradiſe above. This were an inſtance of the ſtrength of grace; and, O but a new diſcovery of the glory of Chriſt would make a man long to be above, and look with contempt upon all ſublunary enjoyments! For, as a man that looks any time on the natural ſun, when after that he looks down, the earth is but a lump of darkneſs to him; ſo, if we look to the glory of Chriſt, the Sun of righteouſneſs, and the glory of heaven, how will it darken all worldly glory, and make us long to be above.—Now, I ſay, it is the duty of believers, that are delivered from under the law, and conſequently from the ſtrength of ſin, to diſcover, in oppoſition thereto, the ſtrength of grace, in theſe or the like inſtances that I have named.

"To ſeek life by the law, or juſtification by the "deeds of it, ſays one, is to ſeek life in death, juſtifi- "cation in condemnation, and heaven in hell." There are two things neceſſary to ſalvation, namely, juſtification and ſanctification; but the law can give none of them. Pardon ſin it cannot; for, it is the office of the law to condemn ſinners, and to curſe the tranſgreſſors of it: renew unto holineſs it cannot; for, though it be holy, yet it cannot make any holy, in regard, that whom it leaves under the curſe, it leaves under the power of ſin, which is the leading part of the curſe; on which account it is declared in our text, that the ſtrength of ſin is the law. If the law could make a ſinner either happy or holy, it could neither be juſt nor holy itſelf; but ſo juſt and holy is the law, that it puniſhes the leaſt tranſgreſſion with the greateſt judgment: now, the ſtrength of ſin being the greateſt judgment, and the greateſt curſe; to inflict this judgment on a ſinner, and yet to make him holy, is a contradiction; therefore, though

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it require holineſs, yet it cannot work holineſs in a ſinner: and hence, it does not detract from, but rather declare and illuſtrate both the juſtice and holineſs of the law, to ſay, that the ſtrength of ſin is the law. And, from this ſubject,

We may further infer the woful nature and infinite evil of ſin, as it ſtands in oppoſition to the infinite holineſs of God manifeſted in his holy law: for, in this doctrine, we may ſee ſin to be both a breach of the command, and a branch of the curſe of God's law; for, as I ſhewed in the doctrinal part, the law threatened death to the tranſgreſſor: and ſpiritual death, which is the power and ſtrength of ſin, is the greateſt death therein threatened. The meaning of this, in ſhort, is, that the grand part of the threatening of the law was to this effect, "In the day thou ſinneſt thou ſhalt die;" which, when underſtood of ſpiritual death, the meaning is, If thou ſin, and break my law, then thou ſhalt be left to the power of ſin; I will puniſh thy ſin with ſin: there is no evil ſo great as ſin, and there is no puniſhment ſo great as ſin; if therefore, ſays the law, the commiſſion of ſin be thy choice, the ſtrength of ſin ſhall be thy doom: here is the greateſt curſe of God's law againſt ſin; ſin is a departing from God. Now, ſays God in the law, If you depart from me, then I will let you depart from me to ſin, where the ſtrength of ſin ſhall be your greateſt puniſhment in time; and at laſt I will bid you depart from me to hell, where the perfection of ſin ſhall be your greateſt puniſhment to eternity. The ſtrength of ſin then is to be conſidered, not only as it is a breach of the law, but as it is a branch of the curſe thereof. This ſentence of the law is paſt, and it is ſo far execute, as that a man is under the power and ſtrength of ſin, which, in this reſpect, is a penal evil, as well as a moral. The firſt ſin that ever was committed by our firſt parents, was a moral evil; that is, a violation of the moral law, a breach of the command: but all the following ſin, both in them and their ſinful poſterity, is not only a moral evil; that is, a breach of the command; but alſo, a penal evil; that is, a branch of the curſe, or a juſt judgment *inflicted*, according to the ſentence of the holy law,

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againſt the ſinner for his breach thereof. As ſin is a moral evil, though it take occaſion from the law, yet the holy law can have no caſualty, no hand in it; for, on the contrary, as it commands holineſs, ſo it diſcharges ſin, and threatens it with the fire and ſword of God's everlaſting vengeance: but as ſin is a penal evil, or a righteous puniſhment of ſin, the law is properly the ſtrength of it; for, to ſay in this ſenſe, that the ſtrength of ſin is the law, is to ſay, that the ſtrength of ſin is a juſt judgment of God inflicted upon the ſinner, according to the threatening of his juſt and holy law. Ye ought then, ſtill to diſtinguiſh here betwixt ſin, as it is a moral evil, and as it is a penal evil; for, not to diſtinguiſh well here, were to make this text unintelligible to you: why? becauſe to ſay that the law is the ſtrength of ſin, or the cauſe of it, as it is a moral evil, were to blaſpheme the holy law of God; but to ſay, that the law is the ſtrength of ſin, as it is a penal evil, and an execution of the ſentence of the law, is to commend the law, in its holineſs and juſtice both. Let this therefore be kept ſtill in mind, that the law is properly the ſtrength of ſin, not as ſin is a breach of its command, but as it is a branch of its curſe; and let this fill your heart with a deep ſenſe of the woful nature and prodigious evil of ſin, in that it is both a breach of God's command, and a branch of God's curſe. As it is a breach of the command, it is our giving up ourſelves to work wickedneſs; as it is a branch of the curſe, it is God's giving us up to ourſelves, and to the rule and ſtrength of ſin. Behold ſin here as the moſt fearful invention that ever was: for, as ſin is the greateſt evil that hell could invent, ſo God's puniſhing ſin with ſin, is the greateſt evil that heaven could invent. Sin, as it is a moral evil, and a breach of the law-command, is the moſt ugly brat of hell, a brat of our own, begotten in us by the devil; and in this reſpect it is an affronting of the holineſs of God, appearing in the precept of the law: and ſin, as it is a penal evil, or the ſtrength of ſin, as it is the puniſhment of ſin, and a branch of the law-curſe, is the moſt dreadful fruit and offspring of Heaven's vengeance againſt ſin; and in this reſpect it is a

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flaſh of the fire of God's infinite juſtice, ariſing out of the threatening of the broken law.—See here, then, the infinite evil of ſin, in that the ſtrength of ſin is the law.

6. Hence we may infer the ſtanding force and binding power and authority of the law over all that are under it, as a covenant of works: though it be broken, yet it is binding; though it be violated by us, yet it is obligatary upon us by nature, which is evident from its continuing to be the ſtrength of ſin to all unbelievers, who, if they were not both under the power of the command, and of the curſe of the law, would not be under the commanding and condemning power of ſin: the power of the law-command they are under, is the ſtrength of ſin occaſionally; and the power of the law-curſe is the ſtrength of ſin effectively.

(1.) The power of the command they are under, is the ſtrength of ſin occaſionally; Rom. vii. 8. "Sin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence." Here the command is the occaſion that ſin takes, not that it gives occaſion; nay, the law, in its own nature, is ſo far from being the cauſe of ſin, that it does not ſo much as give occaſion of ſinning: but man's corrupt nature does take occaſion from it to break forth into more ſin, when it is ſtirred up, and irritate by the command and prohibition of the law; even as the ſparks ariſe out of a furnace when it is ſtirred up, ſo do the ſparkles of ſin ariſe out of the furnace of corrupt nature, when ſtirred up by the knowledge of the law that condemns it; and, inſtead of being amended thereby, doth bring forth ſin and ſinful deſires more abundantly. The law being the ſtrength of ſin this way, ſhews how much the power and force of the law takes place even over unbelievers, though in a way that is very terrible; and how much they are under obligation to the command, which yet they are ſo unwilling to yield ſubjection unto; yea, and are direct enemies to, Rom. viii. 7. Surely all things work together for evil to them that hate God, ſince the law itſelf, which ſhould ſerve to call men to God, makes them the more to flee from *him, and run* headlong unto ſin and death, through the

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untowardneſs of our nature, that is altogether eſtranged from God. This, by the way, takes the whole fault of our ſins from the law, and lays it where it ought to be, even upon our perverſe crooked natures; for the law is no more to be blamed by becoming the occaſion of ſo many great evils, than a phyſician is to be blamed, if, upon his forbidding cold drink unto a ſick man, the patient ſhould more frequently and vehemently thirſt after it. There are three ſorts of people that ſhould lay this matter to heart: All the children of diſobedience, that are in a natural ſtate, ſhould hereby be ſtirred up to ſeek after a new birth, and a new nature, ſince this is the wretched condition of corrupt nature: All the children of grace, whoſe natures are changed, ſhould hereupon be humbled, both in regard that they were once under the power of this poiſoned corruption, and have ſtill the remains of it ſticking in them, and prompting them to offend: and again, all the hearers of the word in general, ought hereupon to hear with fear, and to pray that they be not made the worſe by the word, through the fault of their own wicked nature; and particularly, that the goſpel itſelf be not the ſavour of death to them, and the ſtrength of ſin; which goſpel is the only thing in the world, that preſcribes an antidote againſt the ſtrength of ſin. It is ſad enough, when men draw ſtrength to ſin from the law; but, what a dreadful thing it is, to draw ſtrength to ſin from the goſpel! This is the ſin of ſins, that turns the grace of God into wantonneſs, and when Chriſt himſelf is a ſtumbling-block, and a rock of offence. But,

(2.) The power of the curſe of the law, that ſinners are under, is the ſtrength of ſin effectively; Rom. iv. 15. "The law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no tranſgreſſion:" as if the apoſtle ſhould ſay, Mens corrupt nature cannot obſerve God's law; therefore, where there is a law, there is and muſt be tranſgreſſion; where there is tranſgreſſion, there is and muſt be wrath: for, the law muſt curſe the breaker of it; and of this curſe, as I ſaid, the ſtrength of ſin is a principal part.—Both theſe particulars then do prove the ſtanding force and

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authority of the broken law over all that are under it, and out of Chriſt; though they have loſt ability to obey, yet it retains its authority to command; and though the law is weak to juſtify, yet it is powerful to condemn. Its weakneſs to juſtify, is not the fault of the law; it is in us, Rom. viii. 3. It is weak through the fleſh; our corrupt nature: it cannot juſtify us, becauſe we cannot fulfil the righteouſneſs of it, and it cannot give life, Gal. iii. 21. As the ſun cannot give light to him that hath no eye; ſo the law cannot give life to him that hath no perfect righteouſneſs: but its power to condemn is from its own nature, as it is a juſt law, curſing every tranſgreſſor, Gal. iii. 10.; and from the juſtice of the Law-giver, which appears in the ſanction of the law, even as his holineſs in the precept thereof. Every ſinner out of Chriſt, then, remains under the commanding and condemning power of the law, as a covenant of works, as is evident from his being under the commanding and condemning power of ſin; the ſtrength of ſin to command him, being occaſionally from the commanding power of the law that he is under; and the ſtrength of ſin to condemn, being properly from the condemning power of the law that he is under: yea, the condemning power of the law influences the commanding as well as the condemning power of ſin over him, while the ſinner is by the ſentence of the law righteouſly condemned to that ſlavery and bondage under ſin, for his breach of the law; in which ſenſe effectively, yet in a moſt holy and juſt manner, the law is the ſtrength of ſin. This ſtanding force and binding authority of the law, as a covenant, both in its commanding and condemning power over unbelievers, is what makes them ſtand in abſolute need of Chriſt, both in his active and paſſive obedience, as revealed in the goſpel. The law-command they are under, when it is ſeen to be impreſtable, makes them need to flee to Chriſt's obedience; the law-curſe that they are under, when it is ſeen to be intolerable, makes them need to flee to Chriſt's ſatisfaction: and hence it is ſaid, Gal. iii. 24. "The law is our ſchool-maſter to bring us to Chriſt;" which it could *not* be, if ſinners under the goſpel were not under the com-

commanding and condemning power of it: for, how does it bring us to Chriſt, but as it urges us to obedience, which is now impoſſible, and condemns us for our diſobedience? Not that the law brings any to Chriſt directly; for it neither reveals Chriſt, nor can give ſtrength to believe in him: but only accidentally, in that it accuſes and condemns us, and ſo brings us to Chriſt, as a diſeaſe brings one to a phyſician.

7. Hence we may ſee the danger of being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, to the eſtabliſhing of a righteouſneſs of our own; ſeeing thus we keep ourſelves under the law, and ſo under the power of ſin: the danger of this is declared, Rom. x. 3. "They being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and ſo going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs," or to make their own rotten footleſs righteouſneſs to ſtand, "have not ſubmitted themſelves to the righteouſneſs of God:" and thus they keep themſelves under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin.—Whatever view we take of God's righteouſneſs here, ignorance of it hath this ſad effect. There are three ways in which God's righteouſneſs is taken in ſcripture; either, 1. The righteouſneſs that is in him, his eſſential holineſs and righteouſneſs: Or, 2. The righteouſneſs that he requires of us by the law: Or, 3. The righteouſneſs that he provides for us in the goſpel. Now, ignorance of God's righteouſneſs, in any of theſe reſpects, is a dangerous root of a legal ſpirit, and of eſtabliſhing our own righteouſneſs, and ſo of remaining under the law, that is the ſtrength of ſin.

(1.) If we conſider it as the righteouſneſs that is in God, his eſſential righteouſneſs and infinite holineſs of nature, as he is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity, and who will in no wiſe clear the guilty; ſurely they that know this righteouſneſs of God, will never truſt to a righteouſneſs of their own. How can a ſinner ſtand before this holy God, or be juſtified in his ſight? Sinners may be juſtified in the ſight of men by their works, but cannot be juſtified in the ſight of God; nay, ignorance of God's righteouſneſs foſters the opinion of ſelf-righteouſneſs and juſtification by works, which opinion is even the root of licentiouſneſs of life. And

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whence is it that ſelf-juſticiaries, that hold juſtification by their own works, are ordinarily moſt licentious in their life and converſation? Why, the reaſon is, becauſe the very ſame notions of God that make them fancy he is not ſo ill-pleaſed with their works, but that he can juſtify them by their works, do alſo make them fancy, that he is not ſo ill pleaſed with their ſins as that he will be too ſevere againſt them; and ſo here is a root of licentiouſneſs on which ſin grows, the ſtrength whereof is the law.

(2.) If we conſider God's righteouſneſs, as the righteouſneſs God requires of us in the law; ignorance of this makes them adventure on a righteouſneſs of their own, and go about to eſtabliſh it, and ſo remain under the law as the ſtrength of ſin. Men are ready to dream, that the law reſpects only ſome outward duties, which, when they comply with, they dream alſo that they are acquit by the law, and ſo they give looſe reins to all other diſobedience: but they do not know or conſider, that the law requires perfection; and that internal, in heart and nature; external, in life and converſation; and eternal, in reſpect of perpetuity and duration; yea, ſinleſs obedience; inſomuch that it cannot juſtify any that is, or ever was a ſinner. If this were conſidered, then their hopes by the law would give up the ghoſt.

(3.) If we conſider God's righteouſneſs, as the righteouſneſs which God hath provided for us in the goſpel; that is, "Chriſt the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 3, 4. which is the principal meaning of the word here; it is the want of the knowledge of this righteouſneſs, that makes men go about to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own, and truſt to it; and ſo, remaining under the law, are under the power and ſtrength of ſin, becauſe they remain under the curſe of the law ſo long as they want this law-magnifying righteouſneſs, this law-fulfilling righteouſneſs: for the law cannot but curſe every breaker of it; and ſo, the ſtrength of ſin being a part of the curſe, they remain under the ſtrength of ſin ſo long as they remain under the curſe of the law, through the want of this righteouſneſs, which *would make them* to be accounted perfect keepers of the law,

law, and ſo would really free them from the ſtrength of ſin.—See then, what a dangerous thing it is to be ignorant of God's righteouſneſs.

8. Hence ſee, what need there was that our help ſhould be laid upon ſuch a mighty One as our Lord Jeſus is, he being the end of the law for righteouſneſs, who alone can deliver us from the ſtrength of ſin. There is no power can conquer ſin, but that power that can ſatisfy the law, both in its command and demand. It is utterly impoſſible for any man to deliver himſelf from the ſtrength of ſin; nay, we can no more do it, than we can ſhake off the curſe of the law that we are under: the ſtrength of ſin hath the ſtrength of the curſe on its ſide; the ſtrength of the curſe of the law hath the ſtrength of infinite juſtice on its ſide: and ſo, the power that can only remove or break the ſtrength of ſin, is that infinite power that can fully ſatisfy infinite juſtice; this, therefore, is the work of him who is the wiſdom of God, and the power of God. We need not only a helper, but a ſtrong One; therefore God hath laid help upon One that is mighty, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. We need not only a Saviour, but a great One, and ſo Chriſt is called, Iſa. xix. 29. "He ſhall ſend them a Saviour, and a great One, and he ſhall deliver them." He muſt be a great Saviour, that is the author of ſo great a ſalvation; none elſe but the eternal Son of God, who is eſſentially one with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt. Woe to the Arian blaſphemy, that would rob us of the only ground of our hope; yea, rob the Son of God of his ſupreme Deity. This is our mighty Samſon, that carries away the gates of Gaza, the gates of hell, that they might not prevail againſt us; and he only was able to carry away the ſtrength of ſin, by giving full ſatisfaction to the law and Lawgiver, and ſo to ſtop the progreſs of God's infinite wrath againſt ſinners with his everlaſting righteouſneſs; which law-magnifying righteouſneſs being once imputed and applied, the legal and condemning ſtrength of ſin is broken, and thereupon the actual and commanding ſtrength of it gradually broken, according to the meaſure of faith's daily improvement of this righteouſneſs of Chriſt, till it be wholly deſtroyed in the very in-being thereof

at death. For, as he is able, ſo he will ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him.

9. Hence ſee, what obligations believers are under to Chriſt, their great Captain of ſalvation, and glorious Conqueror, that delivers them from the law. How ſweet is this ſwan-ſong in the view of death, "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." What makes ſin, as it is the ſting of death, and death, as it bears that ſting, to be ſo terrible? Why, it is the law, as it is the ſtrength of ſin; but now, the great Law-giver becoming, in the perſon of his Son, the law-ſatisfier, in the room of the ſinner the law-breaker, and thereupon the Judge becoming the juſtifier, according to Rom. iii. 26. the law hath no more power to curſe the believer; and ſo ſin hath loſt its ſtrength, and death loſt its ſting, and the grave its victory. The believer being perfectly delivered from the curſe of the law, he is perfectly delivered from the ſtrength of ſin, as it is a branch of the curſe.

Queſt. What is the ſtrength of ſin that ſtill remains with the believer while here, if it be not a part of the curſe?

Anſw. (1.) Sin in all unbelievers is, as I ſaid, both a breach of the law, and a branch of the curſe: but, with reſpect to believers, though their ſin be a breach of the law, yet they are under no part of the curſe of the law; for, though ſin be a curſed thing, and the law curſes ſin where-ever it is, and curſes the ſin of believers, as well as the ſin of others; yet, as the law cannot curſe the perſon of the believer, ſo the ſin that is ſuffered to remain in him, is deſigned for ſome other purpoſe than to be a curſe to him; for it is one of the great privileges of the believer, that he is delivered from the wrath of God, and the curſe of the moral law. Therefore,

(2.) Though ſin in itſelf, and in its own nature, is a curſe and a miſery where-ever it is; yet, with reſpect to the believer, whenever he is delivered from the curſe *of the law;* the remaining ſtrength of ſin in him is made

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ſubſervient to ſome other end than ever it had before, through the infinite wiſdom of that God who can turn a curſe to a bleſſing, and a miſery to a mercy. Though he ſtill looks upon ſin as his greateſt miſery, and on himſelf as miſerable and wretched becauſe of ſin, ſaying, with the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of ſin and death?* yet it is his mercy that he ſees ſin to be his miſery now, inaſmuch as it ſhall not make him miſerable hereafter. Sin is ſtill the greateſt burden to the believer; but it is his mercy that ſin is his burden now, that it may not weigh him down to hell, as it will do the reſt of the world, who feel not the burden of ſin in time. Sin is ſtill, to the believer, the greateſt diſeaſe; but it is his mercy that ſin is his diſeaſe: for, whereas others that go on in ſin impudently, and without ſpiritual remorſe, ſin is not their diſeaſe, with which they are affected or afflicted, and they are in danger of dying of that diſeaſe, like a man that is diſtempered with a fever, and yet hath no ſenſe of it; but believers in Chriſt, having ſin for their diſeaſe, under which they ſigh, and ſob, and moan, and groan, the diſeaſe is not unto death, eternal death, but unto the glory of God, and to their good. It is to the glory of God, as he is JEHOVAH-ROPHI, the Lord their helper and phyſician; and it is ordered to their good, the curſe is turned ſo far to a bleſſing, that the remaining ſtrength of ſin in the believer is made ſubſervient to theſe following good ends.

1. It ſerves for his inſtruction, that he may ſee more and more of the corruption of his nature and the daily need that he hath of Chriſt, both for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, that Chriſt may be more and more precious to him, as the brazen ſerpent to the ſtung Iſraelites. Sin in itſelf tends to deſtruction, but, through grace, it turns to the believer's inſtruction; for hereby he learns more and more, that his own righteouſneſs is but filthy rags, that Chriſt's righteouſneſs is the only fair and glorious robe: he learns more and more, that as his damnation would have been juſt, if he had been ſent to hell; ſo, his ſalvation will be free, if he be brought

to heaven: he learns more and more many ſad experiences in the daily working of ſin in him, and many ſweet experiences in the daily improvement of Chriſt.

2. The remaining ſtrength of ſin in the believer ſerves for his correction, as Peter's fall was for the correction of his pride and ſelf-conceit, when he ſaid, *Though all men forſake thee, yet will not I.* Indeed, it is one of the ſoreſt effects of God's fatherly anger towards his children, when he leaves them to one ſin, thereby to correct them for another: under ſuch a dreadful correction as this, the believer may have dreadful apprehenſions of God through unbelief, as if he were deſigned to ruin and deſtroy him, ſaying, as the church, Iſa. lxiii. 16. "Wherefore haſt thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" It is what the Lord's people may have frequent occaſions to obſerve, that the Lord ſharply reproves and corrects them for their ſloth and unwatchfulneſs, by leaving them to other ſins; as it was with David in the matter of Bathſheba: therefore, *Watch and pray*, ſays Chriſt, *that ye enter not into temptation.*

3. The remaining ſtrength of ſin in the believer ſerves for his humiliation; 2 Chron. xxii. 26. *Hezekiah was humbled for the pride of his heart.* Believers are in danger of being lifted up, even after great manifeſtations; as Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7.; therefore, a thorn in the fleſh, and a meſſenger of Satan, may be ordered to buffet them, leſt they ſhould be exalted above meaſure.

4. The remaining ſtrength of ſin in the believer ſerves for his excitation and upſtirring; it is ſo ordered, that ſin ſhould abide in believers, that it may be the continual ground, reaſon, and occaſion of the exerciſing of all graces, and putting a luſtre on their obedience: ſome excellent graces, ſuch as repentance and mortification, could have no exerciſe, if the ſtrength of ſin were altogether removed; and while we are in this world, there is a beauty in theſe graces, that is an overbalance for the evils of the remainders of ſin. And it renders ſpiritual obedience the more valuable, the more that remaining ſin renders it difficult and impracticable *to nature.*

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[1.] The remaining ſtrength of ſin excites the believer to love and long for more of the enjoyment of Chriſt here, and for the full enjoyment of him hereafter, ſaying, O to be there, where there ſhall be no more ſin! O when ſhall the day break, and the ſhadows of ſin and ſorrow flee away! "Haſte, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether."

[2.] The remaining ſtrength of ſin excites him to weary of this life: Oh! "I am weary of my life, becauſe of the daughters of Heth," ſaid Rebekah; ſo, I am weary of my life, becauſe of the remains of ſin, ſays the believer; what is life to me, when I am in a continual conflict with ſuch boſom-enemies?

[3.] It excites him to pray without ceaſing, ſaying, with David, Pſalm xix. 12. "Who can underſtand his errors? cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults; keep back thy ſervant alſo from preſumptuous ſins, and let them not have dominion over me." Where it is ſuppoſed, that ſecret ſins that are overlooked, and, perhaps, not known to be ſins, may make way for theſe that are preſumptuous. Thus there is a ſecret pride, that may ſeem to be nothing but a frame of mind ſuitable to our wealth, dignity, parts, or abilities; ſenſuality may ſeem to be nothing but a lawful participation of the good things of this life; paſſion may ſeem to be proper zeal; and covetouſneſs may ſeem to be but a neceſſary care of ourſelves and our families: but, when the ſeeds of theſe are covered with ſuch pretences, they will at length ſpring up, and bear bitter fruits in the lives of men. The beginning of all apoſtacy lies in ſuch covered pretences: we need therefore to pray with the pſalmiſt, to be cleanſed from ſecret faults, that we may be kept back from preſumptuous ſin: the remaining ſtrength of ſin excited him thus to pray.

[4.] It excites alſo to deprecate, with the pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxliii. 2. "Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, for in thy ſight no fleſh can be juſtified:" The words here, *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant*, may be read in the original, *Go not to law with thy ſervant.* Tho' David was a ſervant of God, a man according to God's own heart, yet he deprecates the law-trial:

the beſt ſervants that ever God had, of mere men, cannot be juſtified by the law; they ſee ſin remaining in them, and therefore are excited to pray, *Lord, go not to law with me;* go not to the law-threatening with me, to purſue me for my debt; go not to the law-tribunal with me, but rather go to the goſpel-tribunal with me; go to Chriſt with me.

[5.] The remaining ſtrength of ſin excites them to make much of Chriſt, when they get a grip of him, and to ſay, with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 26. "I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me." Oh! my woful ſin, and fearful departings had made a ſad ſeparation betwixt thee and me, inſomuch that I never thought thou wouldeſt have deigned to give me another viſit: but now, that I have got thee in my arms again, through grace I will keep the grip; I cannot think of our parting again, nor of my going back to that ſad and ſinful caſe again; nay, "I will not let thee go, till thou bleſs me."

[6.] The remaining ſtrength of ſin excites them to much heart-exerciſe, ſuch as ſelf-ſearching, and pleading that the Lord would ſearch, and try, and diſcover them to themſelves, ſaying, "That which I know not, teach thou me:" To ſelf-abaſement and abhorrence; "Now I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes:" To ſelf-annihilation; Oh! I am nothing, leſs than nothing, worſe than nothing: To ſelf-condemnation; now the man judges himſelf, and paſſes ſentence againſt himſelf in the court of conſcience, that he may not be judged but aſſoilzed in the court of heaven: To ſelf-obſervation and watchfulneſs; according to that of the apoſtle, "Look to yourſelves;" and that of the pſalmiſt, "I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my tongue;" he is therefore excited the more narrowly to notice and obſerve the traitor that is in his boſom, and to keep a watch: And to ſelf-reformation, ſaying with David, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies." And, in theſe reſpects, God makes the believer's malady to be his medicine; and, on theſe accounts, the ſtrength of ſin is not wholly aboliſhed in believers in time; and infinite wiſdom ſees, that a ſtate of ſpiritual warfare is *beſt for them.*

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Let none, from what hath been ſaid, take encouragement to ſin, nor abuſe this grace of God unto wantonneſs; for they that do ſo, will diſcover themſelves to be ſtrangers to Chriſt, and ſo under the ſtrength of ſin, as it is a branch of the curſe of the law. Shun, like hell, and abhor that peace of mind that is conſiſtent with the love of, and living in any known ſin; for, though believers may be often ſurpriſed into known ſins, yet while they refuſe all inward peace but that which comes in by moſt fervent deſires of deliverance from ſin, and continual application to Chriſt for the ruin of ſin, they diſcover that they are ſafe from the dominion thereof: yet theſe people that maintain a preſumptuous peace, while they live in any known ſin, are near the borders of the territories of helliſh ſecurity, where ſin reigns unto death.

10. To add no more from this doctrine, we may infer the dangerous influence of any new doctrine of a legal ſtrain, that ſtands in oppoſition to this truth, That the law of works is the ſtrength of ſin, to all ſinners that have broken and violate it. Whence it being manifeſt, that all unbelievers are under the commanding and condemning power of the law, as a covenant of works, which appears by their being under the commanding and condemning ſtrength of ſin; and that it is the privilege only of believers that they are not under the law, as a covenant, either to be juſtified or condemned thereby; there is a twofold dangerous doctrine that ſtands in oppoſition to this truth.

[1.] That doctrine, which aſſerts, That unbelievers, under the goſpel, are not under the COMMANDING power of the law, as a covenant of works: Which ſome attempt to prove by this argument; Unbelievers under the goſpel, cannot be under two oppoſite obligations, namely, to ſeek life by their own obedience; and, at the ſame time, to ſeek life by the obedience of another: now, they are by the goſpel, obliged to ſeek life by the obedience of another, *viz.* of Chriſt; therefore, they are not obliged to ſeek life by their own obedience: and conſequently, ſay they, unbelievers are not under the commanding power of the law, as a covenant of works.

ANSW. This argument, or rather quirk, and ſophiſm, may be eaſily expoſed, if we conſider,

1. That it goes upon a wrong hypotheſis, ſuppoſing, as if the form of the command of the covenant of works did ly in this, that Adam was to ſeek life by his obedience, or that man was to ſeek juſtification by his own works; which is a ſuppoſition that is not matter of fact: for, Adam might have been juſtified by his works, or by his own perfect obedience, without ſeeking or aiming at any thing, but the pleaſing or glorifying of God, which is the ſupreme end of man's obedience; whereas, man's ſeeking, or aiming at life and juſtification by his obedience, is but a ſubordinate end thereof; yea ſuch, as that the command of that covenant might have been fulfilled without it: for, if Adam had yielded that perfect obedience, without ſeeking any thing elſe, or aiming at any other end, but the ſupreme one, *viz.* the glory of God, he would have got life by his obedience, even though he had generouſly neglected the ſupreme end altogether, namely, the ſeeking his own life by it, which was no part of the command itſelf. For, as our common Standards expreſs it, "When God created "man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, "upon condition of perfect obedience:" not upon condition of man's ſeeking life by his obedience; nay, this would have made the covenant of works run in a very ſelfiſh ſtrain, namely, inſtead of *Do and live*, it would run, Seek life by your doing, and you ſhall live: and, inſtead of the threatening, If you do not, you ſhall die; it would run, If you ſeek not life by your doing, you ſhall die: which is a plain perverting the tenor of that covenant.

In oppoſition to that hypotheſis, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that if the covenant had ſtood, as Adam would not have claimed life ſo much upon his perfect obedience, as upon the free promiſe of God, connecting life with that obedience; ſo, in obeying, he would not ſo much, if at all, have ſought his own life and happineſs, as the glory of God, who graciouſly condeſcended to annex the promiſe of life with that obedience, which he was naturally obliged unto, prior to that annexation. Surely, what man was obliged to by nature was not made void

void, but rather furthered, by the covenant of works: but man was naturally obliged to obey his Creator perfectly, and that for this great end, *viz.* the glorifying of him; therefore, whatever hope of life, or fear of death might be the conſequent of annexing the promiſe of life, and the threatening of death to the precept, yet it was the precept itſelf, to which life and death were thus annexed: that was the command of that covenant, and not man's ſeeking to have life, or to ſhun death by his obedience. The promiſe and threatening were motives to urge man's obedience; ſeeking to have life, or ſhun death, was but a ſubordinate end, that man might have lawfully had in his obedience. But now, to ſuppoſe, that man's being obliged to ſeek life by his obedience, was the command of the covenant of works, is to confound the command with the ſanction, and man's obedience to the command, with the ſubordinate end that he might have had in his obedience. If man had merely ſought himſelf, and his own life, by his obedience, without ſeeking God's glory; ſurely he had ſinned, and ſo broken that covenant: but if he had ſought only God's glory, and yielded perfect obedience, merely with that view, and abſtracting from that ſubordinate end, the ſeeking of himſelf and his own life; I ſay, ſuppoſe he had done ſo, he would have got life by his obedience: therefore, ſeeing life might have been obtained by obedience, by virtue of the promiſe of life annexed to it, and obtained without man's ſeeking or aiming at himſelf, and his own life by his obedience, then man's ſeeking life and juſtification thereby could never be the preciſe form of the command of that covenant. Why, the command could have been obeyed, and the promiſe of life, annexed thereto, could have been accompliſhed, without that ſeeking; ſeeing the promiſe was made to man's obedience, and not to his ſeeking life by his obedience. You ſee then, the error of the ſophiſm lies in miſtating and miſrepreſenting the form of the command of the covenant of works. Here it is evident, that unbelievers under the goſpel, may be obliged to ſeek life by the obedience of another, even of Chriſt, and yet remain under the commanding power of the covenant of works; ſince the

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command thereof did not ly preciſely in this, *viz.* that man was to ſeek life by his own obedience: no, this was but a ſecondary end, or a conſequent lawfully deducible from the promiſe annexed to the command, but no conſtitutive part of the command itſelf.

2. The fallacy of that ſophiſm appears alſo in this, that it ſuppoſes, as if ſinners, or unbelievers, not under the goſpel, were obliged, by the covenant of works, to ſeek life and juſtification by their own works and obedience: but though they, as well as other ſinners, do naturally, if they ſeek life at all, ſeek it by the law, or by their own works; yet the covenant of works never ſaid to a ſinner, *Seek life by your own works.* Though we ſhould grant, that ſeeking life by our perfect obedience were the proper command of the covenant of works, to man in his innocent ſtate, while he was capable to yield it; yet it never commanded a ſinner to ſeek life that way, nor did it ever promiſe life to a ſinner, a breaker of that covenant, upon his ſeeking life by his obedience: nay, it is impoſſible that ever the law ſhould do ſo, otherwiſe it would condemn itſelf, ſhould it offer to juſtify any tranſgreſſor of it, by whatever after-obedience of his; for, it is the very nature of the law to condemn the leaſt tranſgreſſor, whatever his after-works may be: no act of obedience, no not the higheſt, even of ſaints in heaven, can expiate for the leaſt breach of God's law; nor can any mortification take away the fault of ſin committed, Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. iii. 20. 23. Jam. ii. 10. The law requires no leſs than a ſinleſs obedience; yea the perfect obedience of a ſinleſs man; but never did, nor does require of any ſinner, that he ſhould ſeek life by his obedience. No man, that is a ſinner, is capable of any obedience but what is imperfect; now, imperfect obedience is a breach of the covenant of works, which requires abſolute perfection, Gal. iii. 10. Therefore, if it ſhould require any ſinner to ſeek life by his own obedience, then it would require him to ſeek life in a ſinful way, namely, by the continued breach of the law, which his beſt obedience would be, ſo long as it is, and cannot be but imperfect. Now, to ſuppoſe that the law requires this of any ſinner, whether under the goſpel or not, is to ſpeak wick-

wickedly of the holy and perfect law of God. The law of the covenant of works requires no leſs than ever it did; yea, it requires more of the ſinner, than it did of the ſinleſs man: it required only active obedience of innocent Adam, but now of the ſinner it requires active and paſſive obedience too; though the ſinner be inſolvent, and utterly unable to pay his debt, yet the law requires full payment of his double debt, both of obedience to the command, and ſatisfaction for his ſin in breaking of it.

Herein the caſe of unbelievers appears to be moſt miſerable, that they are under the commanding, as well as the condemning power of the covenant of works; that is, they are under an obligation to perfect obedience, and that upon pain of eternal death, under the ſentence whereof they already ly; and under the continued forfeiture of eternal life, and all title thereto, by reaſon of their want of that obedience, and violation of that covenant. That all unbelievers are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain,

(1.) Becauſe they are under the curſe of it. If they were not under the commanding power, they could not be under the condemning power of it; if they were not under obligation to the command of it, how could they juſtly be condemned by it, for want of obedience thereto, or tranſgreſſion thereof? Where no command, no tranſgreſſion; where no tranſgreſſion, no penalty: but under the penalty or ſentence thereof they are, Gal. iii. 10.: therefore they remain under the command of it, ſo long as they remain out of Chriſt.

(2.) That they are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, becauſe they are under the law wherein eternal life is connected with perfect doing. That they are under the law is evident, ſo long as they are not under grace, Rom. vi. 14. But it is now their miſery, that this law they are under, is a law wherein the connection ſtands betwixt obedience and eternal life: though there is no connection by the law, betwixt their obedience now, and the promiſe of eternal life; yet there is a ſtanding connection betwixt eternal life, and

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that perfect, perſonal obedience required by that law they are under, Rom. x. 5. The law ſtill continues to ſay, *The man that does theſe things, ſhall live by them;* and Mat. xix. 16. *If thou would enter into life, keep the commandments:* which plainly ſays, that though they cannot yield obedience, ſuch as the law requires; yet the connexion betwixt life and obedience ſtands by that law they are under: it juſtifies all that can and do obey it, as it doth the elect angels; and it would juſtify men alſo, if they were in caſe, had they power, and did yield obedience to it, in the manner it requires.

(3.) That unbelievers are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, becauſe it is "only "the privilege of believers, that they are not under the "moral law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby "either juſtified or condemned," as in our Confeſſion of Faith; which plainly ſays, not only the moral law was turned into the form of a covenant of works, by its being made a covenant of life and juſtification upon doing, and of death and condemnation upon not doing; but alſo, as it is the privilege only of believers in Chriſt, that they are neither under the command of the covenant of works, to be juſtified by their obedience, nor under the curſe thereof, to be condemned for their diſobedience thereto: which evidently ſhows, that it is the miſery of unbelievers, that they are not only under the condemning power of that covenant, wherein diſobedience and eternal death are connected; but alſo the commanding power of that law, wherein perfect obedience and eternal life are connected. This connexion betwixt life and perſonal obedience does not ſtand with reſpect to the believer, becauſe he is not under the law, Rom. vi. 14. Hence, though the believers in Chriſt had a perſonal righteouſneſs of their own in perfection, as they will have in heaven; yet there is no connexion betwixt it and their juſtification, or eternal life, which is now to them the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt; they being brought under another covenant, which makes their title to life to ſtand upon another foundation, namely, Chriſt's perfect obedience, active and paſſive, *in their room* and ſtead. But as for unbelievers, that

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are under the law, the ſtanding connection betwixt life and obedience by that law, renders them as miſerable, in regard that it confirms their forfeiture of eternal life; as the ſtanding connection betwixt death and diſobedience, by that ſame law, renders them miſerable, in regard that it continues them under the ſentence of eternal death.

(4.) That unbelievers are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, becauſe they are, by the goſpel-diſpenſation, obliged to ſeek life by the obedience of another; which is ſo far from proving them not to be under the command of the covenant of works, that it plainly proves them to be under it. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as Surety, came to fulfil the righteouſneſs of the law, only as it is a covenant of works: and this he did, both by his active obedience, fulfilling the precept of the law; and by his paſſive obedience, ſatisfying the threatening, and enduring the penalty, of the law. Now, if unbelievers were only under the condemning power of the law, then they would need only to ſeek freedom from death, through Chriſt's ſuffering, or paſſive obedience, in their room; but if they were not under obligation to the command of the covenant of works, then there is no need they would have of Chriſt's active obedience, or doing in their room. They were never obliged, as I cleared before, to ſeek life by their obedience; but if they were not obliged, by the command of the covenant of works, to yield that perfect obedience, to which life was promiſed therein, then they would have no need to ſeek life by the obedience of another. What need they to ſeek that in the perſon of another, which they are not obliged to have in their own perſon? Who will ſee a need for ſeeking that which he is not obliged to have or yield? The unbeliever's obligation, therefore, to ſeek life by the obedience of another, namely, of Chriſt, is a plain argument to prove that he is under obligation to the command of the covenant of works.

See then the danger of that doctrine which aſſerts, that unbelievers are not under the command of the covenant of works: it croſſes one of the great ends of the goſpel, which is to hold out Chriſt in his complete righte-

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neſs, both of doing and ſuffering, that ſinners may come and take the whole benefit thereof, in order to their being intitled to eternal life, and ſecured from eternal death, according to the method of the covenant of grace; for, while they remain out of Chriſt, they are wholly and altogether under a covenant of works, both in its commanding and condemning power.

[2.] Another doctrine that ſtands in oppoſition to this truth that we are treating of, is that which aſſerts, That believers by their *new ſins*, come under a liableneſs, or obligation, to the penal ſanction of the law, and threatening of eternal death. I have elſewhere endeavoured to refute this error *; therefore, at preſent, I ſhall not enlarge upon it, but only repel it with the weapons that the text here affords me, namely, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God*, ſays the apoſtle in the name of all believers, *that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where it is plain, that all believers in Chriſt are delivered, by virtue of their union to him as the Lord their righteouſneſs, from the law and the curſe thereof; and conſequently from the ſtrength of ſin, as it is a part of the curſe of the law. See alſo Gal. iii. 13. Rom. viii. 1. 34. vi. 14. and vii. 6. But now, if believers are, after their union to Chriſt, brought, by their new ſins, under a liableneſs to the penal ſanction of the law; that is, to eternal death, and vindictive wrath; then they are brought under the curſe of the law again: and if ſo, then they are brought under the ſtrength of ſin, which is the leading branch of that curſe. If they that aſſert this doctrine, attempt to prove it from this, that every ſin deſerves God's wrath and curſe; and argue from the believer's ſins deſerving it, that therefore believers are liable to it, which is a very wide argument; then, by the ſame argument, I can prove, that becauſe there is no moment of a believer's life, wherein he is perfectly free of ſin, ſo long as want of perfect conformity to the law, either in nature, heart, or way, is ſin; therefore there is not a moment of the believer's life, wherein he is not both under the curſe of the law and the

* *See, in* particular for this, the Author's diſcourſe, on Gal. iv. 28. *intitled, The Pregnant Promiſe*, Vol. IV. p. 309. 400.

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ſtrength of ſin; and conſequently, no ſinful believers in this world, as all believers are, could ever, upon good ground, ſing this ſong of victory in the context. But this is ſuch dreadful doctrine, that I hope I need not enlarge in the refutation thereof.

Believers are neither juſtified upon their perſonal good, nor unjuſtified upon their perſonal evil; but their actual perſonal title to life, and their freedom from all legal obligation, and liableneſs to death, which are the two branches of juſtification, ſtand upon the active and paſſive obedience of Chriſt, imputed to, and received by them, whereby they are diſcharged from all law-debt. And though God continue to pardon the ſins of them that are juſtified, and they daily need his pardon, as he is a Father, whoſe fatherly anger their ſins expoſe them to; yet they have no more to do with him as a wrathful Judge, except in their own unbelieving apprehenſions and legal fears, which are their ſin. Indeed, the more aggravated their ſins are, the more are they liable to the bitter effects of God's fatherly wrath and chaſtiſement; but to make either any good they do a prop to their juſtification, or any evil they do a flaw in their juſtification, this is a popery. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt, with which the believer is ever clothed, ſecures him ſo, that the ſentence of life is never revoked, neither is the ſentence of death ever incurred anew; for, "He that believes hath everlaſting life;" and, "There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt."

Though the law cannot but curſe ſin, where-ever it is, and even the believer's ſins; yet the curſe can never reach his perſon. Chriſt hath no curſed or condemned member. Simeon and Levi had been guilty of heinous crimes, in killing the Iſhmaelites; yet, as ſome think, they being good men in the main, Jacob does not curſe their perſons but their ſins; Gen. xlix. 7. *Curſed be their anger, for it was fierce: and their wrath, for it was cruel;* ſo cruel, that it might have brought a curſe upon them deſervedly. But Jacob, guided by the Holy Ghoſt, lays the curſe on their extravagant paſſion, not on their perſons: and every believer will join iſſue with

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that curſe of the law againſt his ſin, ſaying, Curſed and deſtroyed be my ſin, my unbelief, my enmity.—Believers are not under the law, as a covenant of works, either to be juſtified or condemned thereby: if they were brought, by their new ſins, under the curſe of the law, then they would be brought alſo under the power of ſin, and the reigning ſtrength of corruption; and ſo they are neither juſtified nor ſanctified; neither delivered out of the ſtate of ſin nor of miſery.

See the danger then of this erroneous doctrine, of believers being made liable to the curſe of the law: it is contrary to that goſpel-principle, which aſſerts, "That "believers are delivered from the wrath of God, and "the curſe of the moral law;" and it is contrary to that goſpel-practice of the believer's, which is influenced by the faith of his freedom from the curſe, and the faith of God's everlaſting love in Chriſt Jeſus. That doctrine of believers liableneſs to wrath, upon every ſin, tends to create ſlaviſh fear and dread in God's children; and ſo to diſcourage from duty, and marr true goſpel-holineſs, which is a ſerving of God, not out of ſlaviſh fear, but a child-like love, and of a willing mind: for the fear of hell, and of falling into eternal wrath, and the fear of loſing their ſonſhip, and being diſinherit, which ſome, that pretend much to orthodoxy, tell us, believers ought to be influenced by; theſe fears, I ſay, can never be filial or child-like, becauſe they go upon the ſuppoſition of an allowed act of unbelief, namely, their apprehending God not to be their everlaſting Father in Chriſt, according to the tenor of the new covenant; which if they believed him to be, they could not fear theſe evils, but would rejoice in the faith of the contrary; and this faith would work by love, and love would conſtrain them to holineſs. So that the doctrine I here oppoſe, is not a doctrine according to godlineſs, but rather a doctrine of licentiouſneſs, tending to keep believers themſelves under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin.

This text then ſhows us the dangerous tendency of both theſe new doctrines, the one making the believer not to be under the command of the covenant of works, *and the other* bringing the believer under the curſe of it.

it: but, as they that are not under the command of the law of works, cannot be under the curſe of it; for, where no law, no tranſgreſſion: and as they that are under the curſe of the law, cannot but be under the command of it; for, where no tranſgreſſion no penalty, and where there is a penalty there is tranſgreſſion; ſo this ſtrange doctrine in effect, and by plain conſequences, makes unbelievers happy, and believers miſerable: by freeing the believer from the command, it frees him from the curſe; and by bringing the believer under the curſe, it brings him under the command: and, by this means, unbelievers would not be under the law, but free both from the commanding and condemning power thereof; and believers would be under the law, and in bondage, both to the command and the curſe.—I dare not think, that all who maintain the foreſaid doctrine, are chargeable with aſſerting theſe dreadful conſequences that flow from it; but ſurely it is dangerous to maintain ſuch poſitions, from which ſuch conſequences are naturally deducible.—So far have I enlarged upon an uſe of information, becauſe of the manifold leſſons that ariſe from this text and doctrine.

Uſe 3. The third uſe ſhall be by way of examination and trial, namely, to ſee what ſtate we are in, whether or not we be delivered from the law of works, as it is the ſtrength of ſin. In order to our having a clear view of this, there is a fourfold inquiry we may make.

Inquiry Firſt, In order to try this matter, *viz.* Whether delivered from the law of works, as it is the ſtrength of ſin; let us enquire whether the ſtrength of ſin be truly broken; for ſin has dominion, and a ruling power, over all that are under the law, Rom. vi. 14.

Why, ſay you, who are theſe, in whom the *rule* and *ſtrength* of ſin remains unbroken?

Answ. 1. All you that do not find a daily exerciſe with ſin: they in whom the ſtrength of ſin is daſhed, will be at work to get themſelves purged from it; they are ſtill either lamenting their ſin, or plotting againſt it, praying againſt it, watching againſt it, making uſe of the blood of Chriſt againſt it, and ſometimes mourning

and crying againſt it, and againſt themſelves for it: whereas they in whom it reigns, live peaceably and undiſturbedly with it.

2. All you who have been your whole lifetime ſtrangers to Chriſt, and to fellowſhip and communion with him, you are not yet delivered from ſin; there is a throne of iniquity ſet up in your hearts, which ſhall not have fellowſhip with God, and indeed cannot.

3. All you that know nothing of that diſpenſation of grace, to wit, God's hearing of your prayers, and giving you his countenance therein; ſin reigns in your hearts, and you regard iniquity in your hearts, therefore the Lord hears you not, but is ſaying, Go to the gods whom you have ſerved.

4. All you that never found any pain in parting with ſin, nor any thing of the croſs of Chriſt, or of ſuffering in the fleſh, 1 Pet. iv. 1. It is ſuch as have ſuffered in the fleſh, that have ceaſed from ſin. Some were never diſturbed in their making proviſion for the fleſh; never knew the painful exerciſe of repentance and ſelf-denial; never burdened with the vileneſs of ſin; nor exerciſed in the work of judging themſelves. When a gangrene is to be cured, becauſe it is in the fleſh, the fleſh muſt be cut; ſo, becauſe ſin is ſeated in the fleſh, the fleſh muſt ſuffer by ſelf-denial. There is a woful tenderneſs that we have of ourſelves, that keeps us from mortifying our corruption. Have you never diſcovered or ſeen the evil and bitterneſs of ſin, but lived always in peace? Why, then it ſeems the ſtrong man keeps the houſe: if the paſſing of the gravel ſtone never pained you, ye are not yet quit of it; if your heart was never pained with ſin, it ſays your heart was never yet circumciſed: the ſtrength of ſin remains where there has been no goſpel-mortification. Which leads to a

Second Inquiry, For helping you to try if you be delivered from the law of works, as it is the ſtrength of ſin, namely, inquire if you be acquaint with goſpel-mortification. It is almoſt incredible to think how great a length people may go in legal mortification of ſin, while yet they are utter ſtrangers to the goſpel. It is ſtrange to *think*, what ſome heathens have done this way, and what

what many popiſh monks have done; yea, what great reformations have taken place among ſome, ſo as by their life you would think they were real converts, becauſe of their exactneſs and tenderneſs, while yet they are enemies to grace, and ſtrangers to the goſpel, and conſequently to true mortification, which cannot be by the law, it being the ſtrength of ſin.

QUEST. How ſhall I know, whether it be by the goſpel that I mortify ſin, or by the law?

ANSW. 1. Goſpel and legal mortification differ in their principles from which they proceed. Goſpel-mortification is from goſpel-principles, *viz.* the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 13. "If ye thro' the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live:"—Faith in Chriſt, Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith:"—The love of Chriſt conſtraining, 2 Cor. v. 14. "The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us."—But legal mortification is from legal principles; ſuch as, from the applauſe and praiſe of men, as in the Phariſees; from pride of ſelf-righteouſneſs, as in Paul before his converſion; from the fear of hell; from a natural conſcience; from the example of others; from ſome common motions of the Spirit; and many times from the power of ſin itſelf, while one ſin is ſet up to wreſtle with another, as when ſenſuality and ſelf-righteouſneſs wreſtle with one another: the man, perhaps, will not drink and ſwear; why? becauſe he is ſetting up and eſtabliſhing a righteouſneſs of his own, whereby to obtain the favour of God: here is but one ſin wreſtling with another.

2. Goſpel and legal mortification differ in their weapons with which they fight againſt ſin: the goſpel-believer fights with grace's weapons, namely, the blood of Chriſt, the word of God, the promiſes of the covenant, and the virtue of Chriſt's death and croſs, Gal. vi. 14. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom* [or, as it may be read, WHEREBY, *viz.* by the croſs of Chriſt,] *the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.* But now the man under the law fights againſt ſin by the promiſes and threatenings of the law; by its promiſes, ſaying, I will

obtain life; and win to heaven, I hope, if I do ſo and ſo; by its threatenings, ſaying, I will go to hell and be damned, if I do not ſo and ſo. Sometimes he fights with the weapons of his own vows and reſolutions, which are his ſtrong tower, to which he runs and thinks himſelf ſafe.

3. They differ in the object of their mortification: they both, indeed, ſeek to mortify ſin; but the legaliſt's quarrel is more eſpecially with the ſins of his converſation; but the true believer ſhould deſire to fight as the Syrians got orders; that is, neither againſt great nor ſmall, ſo much as againſt the King himſelf, even againſt original corruption: a body of ſin and death troubles him more than any other ſin in the world; *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?* Rom. vii. 24. His great exerciſe is, to have the ſeed of the woman to bruiſe this head of the ſerpent.

4. They differ in the reaſons of the conteſt: the believer, whom grace teaches to deny all ungodlineſs, he fights againſt ſin, becauſe it diſhonours God, oppoſes Chriſt, grieves the Spirit, and ſeparates between his Lord and him; but the legaliſt fights againſt ſin, becauſe it breaks his peace, and troubles his conſcience, and hurts him, by bringing wrath and judgment on him. As children that will not play in the duſt or ſtour; why? not becauſe it ſullies their clothes, but flees into their eyes, and hurts them: ſo, the legaliſt will not meddle with ſin; why! not becauſe it ſullies the perfections of God, and defiles their ſouls, but only becauſe it hurts them. I deny not, but there is too much of this legal temper even amongſt the godly.

5. They differ in their motives and ends: the believer will not ſerve ſin, becauſe he is alive to God, and dead to ſin, Rom. vi. 6. The legaliſt forſakes ſin, not becauſe he is alive, but that he may live: the believer mortifies ſin, becauſe God loves him; but the legaliſt, that God may love him: the believer mortifies ſin, becauſe God is pacified towards him; the legaliſt mortifies, that he may pacify God by his mortification. He may go a great *length, but* it is ſtill that he may have whereof to glory,

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making his own doing all the foundation of his hope and comfort.

6. They differ in the nature of their mortification: the legaliſt does not oppoſe ſin violently, ſeeking the utter deſtruction of it; if he can get ſin put down, he does not ſeek it to be thruſt out: but the believer, having a nature and principle contrary to ſin, he ſeeks not only to have it weakened, but extirpate: the quarrel is irreconcileable; no terms of accommodation or agreement; no league with ſin is allowed, as it is with hypocrites.

7. They differ in the extent of the warfare, not only objectively, the believer hating every falſe way; but alſo ſubjectively, all the faculties of the believer's ſoul, the whole regenerate part being againſt ſin. It is not ſo with the hypocrite or legaliſt: for as he ſpares ſome ſin or other, ſo his oppoſition to ſin is only ſeated in his conſcience; his light and conſcience oppoſe ſuch a thing, while his heart approves of it.—There is an extent alſo as to time; the legaliſt's oppoſition to ſin is of a ſhort duration, but in the believer it is to the end; grace and corruption ſtill oppoſing one another.

8. They differ in the ſucceſs: there is no believer, but as he fights againſt ſin, ſo firſt or laſt he prevails, though not always to his diſcerning; and though he loſe many battles, yet he gains the war: but the legaliſt, for all the work he makes, yet he never truly comes ſpeed: though he cut off ſome actual ſin, yet the corrupt nature is never changed; he never gets a new heart: the iron-ſinew in his neck, which oppoſes God, is never broken; and when he gets one ſin mortified, ſometimes another and more dangerous ſin lifts up the head: hence all the ſins and pollutions that ever the Phariſees forſook, and all the good duties that ever they performed, made them but more proud, and ſtrengthened their unbelieving prejudices againſt Chriſt, which was the greater and more dangerous ſin.——Thus you may ſee the difference between legal and goſpel mortification, and try yourſelves thereby.

Inquiry third, In order to try whether or not you are

delivered from the law, as it is the ſtrength of ſin; enquire whether you have renounced your own righteouſneſs; for they that make their duties their righteouſneſs, and rely thereupon, are yet under the law, and ſo under the ſtrength of ſin.

QUEST. Who are they that make their duties their righteouſneſs, and eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own, and rely thereupon?

ANSW. 1. Theſe that pleaſe themſelves with a form of godlineſs; and like the Phariſees, make clean the outſide, while yet they have a ſecret enmity at the power of godlineſs, having outward conformity to the letter of the law; and, like Paul before his converſion, touching the law blameleſs, yet little regarding the ſpirituality of it: they profeſs a regard to the law, but if they knew the inſide of it, they would hate it.

2. Theſe that reſt in a certain pitch of religion, when they have as much as they think will ſave them, and are for no more; not knowing what it is to preſs towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

3. Theſe that ſet their duties againſt their ſins, and againſt the wrath of God, and the fear of judgment; not fleeing to Chriſt for refuge, as all true believers do, Heb. vi. 18.; but to their duties, their prayers, and no further. Their betaking themſelves to duties would be well done, if they went a little further; but they ſet their duties againſt their ſins, and thereupon have peace, ſaying, though my ſins be ſo and ſo great, yet my duties are ſo and ſo many; therefore, I hope, all will be right. Thus they ſpeak peace to themſelves, when God never ſpake it: here is a dead fly that ſpoils all the ointment.

4. Theſe who are at enmity with the doctrine of grace; however much they may be engaged in duty, Chriſt is a ſtumbling-block to them, as he was to the Jews, Rom. ix. 33. The doctrine of duties and works, they underſtand; but the doctrine of grace, and of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, they will not underſtand; they ſuſpect it, as an enemy to the law, and Antinomianiſm: they are ignorant of God's righteouſneſs.

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5. Theſe that perform duties in their own ſtrength, are eſtabliſhing a righteouſneſs of their own: though they ſay they can do nothing without Chriſt, yet they can do all without ſeeing much need of him. But, where Chriſt is the righteouſneſs of a ſoul, he will be the ſtrength alſo, Iſa. xlv. 24. Some, indeed, profeſs to take Chriſt for their ſtrength, but they ſet Chriſt againſt himſelf, as it were, by employing the ſtrength of Chriſt againſt the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; that is, when they cry to Chriſt for ſtrength to perform duties, that when they are enabled to perform them, they may make them their righteouſneſs. Hence many will ſay, O for a ſoft heart! O for an enlarged heart in duty! O for grace to ſeek, and a heart to pray! And if they get any thing like it, what make they of it? Why, then they think they have a good enough righteouſneſs, and ſeek no further.

6. Theſe that are of a wrathful and implacable diſpoſition, they diſcover themſelves to be under the law, and under the ſtrength of ſin, and ſo not delivered from eſtabliſhing a righteouſneſs of their own; "The law worketh wrath," Rom. iv. 15. Not only wrath in God againſt man, and wrath in man againſt God; but wrath and enmity alſo in man againſt man, eſpecially upon any real or ſuppoſed injury. When wrath riſes, and reſts, and remains from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, and the man will by no means be reconciled to one that has offered him any affront; nay, he will not pardon, he will not forgive, he will not forget; ſurely that man is under the law, and under the ſtrength of ſin: he never got a pardon from God, that cannot pardon his neighbour an offence; he has not the image of God, not being merciful as his heavenly Father is merciful; he cannot pray, "Forgive me my ſins, as I forgive them that ſin againſt me. Anger reſts in the boſom of fools," ſays Solomon. Anger and wrath may riſe, and rage a little in the boſom of a wiſe man, a good man, but it cannot reſt there; it reſts only in the boſom of fools. This fooliſh and implacable diſpoſition ſhews the man to be ſelfiſh and ſelf-righteous.

7. Theſe whoſe good hope, founded upon, and drawn from duties, never utterly failed them, ſo as to ſay, as it

is, Isa. lvii. 10. "There is no hope;" no, "They are wearied in the greatness of their way, and have found the life of their hand," *&c.*

8. These who, the more they go about outward duties, the more liberty they take to sin, saying, as it is, Prov. vii. 14. and 18. compared, "I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows: come let us take our fill of love, until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves."

9. These who neglect duties, through desperation and hopelessness of getting any good by them, saying, "It is vain to serve the Lord;" why, what is this, but that because they would rely on duties, as their Saviour, when they find they may not do so, they will rather forbear them, and cast all behind their back, saying, "There is no hope?" Hence,

10. When men are madly pursuing their lusts, it may be a sign they are relying on their duties, even when they commit sin desperately. Why, they are desperate debtors; and, perhaps, have been trying, some time or other, to pay their debt by doing something that they might live: but finding that will fail them, they say, There is no hope of paying that debt, therefore they desperately take on more; Jer. ii. 25. "There is no hope; for, I have loved strangers, and after them will I go:" and, Jer. xviii. 12. "There is no hope; but we will walk after our devices, and do every one the imagination of his evil heart." They want not a natural inclination, as all others have, to pay their debt in the way of a law of works, with their own righteousness, which appears whenever conscience is awakened; but for the present they are desperate: if they cannot win to heaven by their own righteousness, they will rather go to hell in their wickedness, than be obliged to the righteousness of another for heaven and eternal life: so strong is the law of *Do and live*, even at the root of their wickedness. *The strength of sin is the law.*

Again, it may be asked here, Who are they that have *renounced* their own righteousness?

ANSW. 1. Such as have renounced their own righteousness, are easily brought to the sense and acknowledge-

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ment of their ſin; whereas others are ready to ſay, with theſe who are commanded to return to the Lord, *Wherein ſhall we return to him?* Such were the Phariſees, Luke xviii. 11, 12.

2. The great care of ſuch will be to advance in the knowledge of Chriſt; they have a high eſteem of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, accounting all other things, on which they formerly relied, but dung; and expecting juſtification and abſolution before God, only upon the account of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, laid hold upon by faith, Phil. iii. 8, 9.

3. From a ſight of their own imperfection, and inability in duty, they go on and make progreſs in Chriſt's ſtrength, Pſalm lxxi. 16. Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. And in all their approaches to God, they are concerned how to get the Spirit with them, and the internal part of duty performed, as well as the external; and their ſpiritual joy and comfort ariſes from Chriſt: Phil. iii. 3. "They worſhip God in the Spirit, rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh."

4. Such will juſtify God in all his diſpenſations of providence towards them, though never ſo harſh; and undervalue damages and loſſes, if they can but win Chriſt, Phil. iii. 8.

5. As they are not lifted up upon the account of their inherent righteouſneſs, but ſay, with Job, chap. x. 15. "If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head;" and with the church, Iſa. lxiv. 6. "All our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags;" and dare plead for nothing at the throne of grace on the account thereof, Dan. ix. 18. Job ix. 15.: ſo their obedience is moſt free; the believer acts freely, not by the coaction and compulſion of the law, and without reſpect to the promiſes or threatenings of it, as it is a covenant of life; he being, by virtue of the new nature, ready to do the will of God with pleaſure. As there is need of no law for the body, which may compel it to eat, drink, ſleep, walk, ſit, ſtand, or do any works of nature, as I ſaid before, becauſe it is ready to do theſe things naturally; ſo there is need of no law-coaction and compulſion to drive the believer to obedience: there are goſpel-threatenings and promiſes, that

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are lined with love, which work upon him, and conſtrain him; but to be acted by the law-threatening of death, in caſe of diſobedience, or the law-promiſe of life upon obedience, is not compatible with the ſtate of the believer, as ſuch; he not being under the law, but under grace, his obedience is free, Luke i. 74, 75.

6. They that have renounced their own righteouſneſs, have renounced their own ſtrength alſo, and ſaid, "In the Lord only have we righteouſneſs and ſtrength," Iſa. xlv. 24. They ſee the need of the ſame creating power that began the good work, to carry it on every day, as long as the new-creation work is a-working. As in the firſt creation, after God made heaven and earth, he left not the work there, but every day the Lord ſaid, Let there be this, and, Let there be that; "Let there be light;" and then, "Let there be fruit:" ſo, in the new creation, believers ſee a need every day of an almighty word, ſaying, Let there be light, ſpiritual light; and after that, Let there be fruit, ſpiritual fruit; and again, every day another word of power from God, to carry on the new-creation work, during the whole ſix days of our life here, till the Sabbath of everlaſting reſt come.

Enquiry fourth, In order to try whether or not you are delivered from the law, as it is the ſtrength of ſin; enquire whether you be experimentally acquaint with the goſpel, as it is the means and ſtrength of holineſs.

QUEST. What is it in the Goſpel that contributes to the ſtrength of holineſs, that believers, who are not under the law, have ſaving experimental acquaintance with?

ANSW. There are theſe following things in the goſpel, that contribute to the ſtrength of holineſs; and you may try what experience you have thereof.

1. What experience have you of the ſanctifying diſcoveries of the goſpel? Some diſcoveries are introductory and preparatory unto, and ſome are effective of holineſs to the deſtroying of the ſtrength of ſin. The introductory diſcoveries are ſuch, as give perſons the faith of the law; ſuch as, conviction from the evidence and demonſtration of the Spirit; this may be called a goſpel-diſcovery, in ſo far as it is by the Spirit promiſed in the *goſpel, John* xvi. 7, 8, 9. If it be aſked here, Does not

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the law prepare us for the grace of the goſpel? We reply; Not in itſelf, any more than ſin and miſery doth: for the law makes known ſin, and leaves a man under wrath, Rom. iii. 19, 20. The whole revelation of the remedy, and application thereof both, is by the grace of the goſpel; Luke xix. 10. Chriſt came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt; both to ſeek, by the revelation of the goſpel; and alſo to ſave, by the application thereof. Yet theſe introductory diſcoveries may be called goſpel-diſcoveries, in reſpect of the author, namely, the Spirit promiſed in the goſpel; and becauſe of their connection, in the elect, with the ſaving work that follows, even though they be not ſaving in their own nature; and therefore, theſe convictions may be called legal, in reſpect of the man's ſtate, who is the ſubject thereof, he not being yet in Chriſt; and in reſpect of the ſubſerviency of the law under the influence of the Spirit, for making theſe diſcoveries of the man's ſinful and miſerable ſtate without this faith of the law, and theſe convictions, one will never prize goſpel-grace, which is the channel wherein true holineſs runs.—But again, ſome goſpel-diſcoveries are effective of holineſs, namely, the diſcovery of the glory and fulneſs of Chriſt, and of the glory of the grace of God in him: *Holineſs to the Lord*, is the immediate effect thereof, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "Beholding as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the ſame image." Now, what know ye of this goſpel-diſcovery of a God in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf? If ever Chriſt was revealed in you, the revelation would be ſanctifying and transforming.

2. What experience have you of the ſanctifying, attracting charms of the goſpel? Have you always ſtopt your ears at the voice of the charmer therein? And, was you never taken and captivated with the joyful ſound? Or, have you been allured with the charms, and drawn by the attractives thereof? What theſe attractives are, you ſee, Hoſea xi. 4. Jer. xxxi. 3. John xii. 32. The bands of love; the divine loving-kindneſs; and all in and through a crucified Chriſt, lifted upon the croſs, on the throne, and on the goſpel-pole. Theſe goſpel-attractives

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are of ſuch a ſanctifying nature, and ſo contributive to the ſtrength of holineſs, that they natively conſtrain the believer thereunto, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. This love of God to the ſinner, begets love in the ſinner to God; "We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us:" and love to God is the very heart of holineſs; "Love is the fulfilling of the law;" and therefore, the more love, the more holineſs.

3. What experience have you of the ſanctifying attire of the goſpel? for the goſpel-garment contributes to the ſtrength of holineſs. There is a twofold goſpel-garment: the one is an unchangeable, and the other a changeable one: the unchangeable goſpel-garment is the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which, when it is put on by faith, the ſoul is ſaid to be clothed with the ſun, Rev. xii. 1.; and it is ſuch an unchangeable robe, that it is never taken off the back of theſe that are once clothed with it, but they remain always fair and perfectly righteous in the ſight of God. It is true, this may be called, and is, indeed, their juſtifying attire; and yet I call it ſanctifying alſo; becauſe, as juſtification is a root and cauſe of ſanctification, ſo it is this righteouſneſs of Chriſt that purchaſed holineſs, and conſequently brings its purchaſe ſtill along with it: and hence the faith of this righteouſneſs works by love, and ſo producing holineſs of heart and way.—The changeable goſpel-garment is the imparted righteouſneſs of Chriſt; that is, holineſs itſelf: I call it changeable, like the moon; not becauſe the ſoul that is clothed with it is ever altogether naked or denuded of it again, but becauſe of the various degrees it admits of; ſometimes more and ſometimes leſs, and the changes from better to worſe, and from worſe to better therein, according to the meaſure of the communication of the Spirit, and according to the need of the new creature, Iſa. xl. 31. "They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength;" they ſhall *change* their ſtrength, as I formerly noticed, the word imports: like a man changing his clothes, having ſeveral ſuits conform to his occaſions: a garment for working, and a garment for walking abroad withal; a garment for night, and a garment for day; one for the week-day, and another for *the Sabbath*: he hath changes of raiment; ſo the believer

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hath changes of ſtrength: if he need to walk, he has walking ſtrength; if to run, running ſtrength; if to flee, flying ſtrength is communicate: for ſo it follows, "They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not weary, and walk and not faint."—Examine your experience with reſpect to this twofold robe: do you know the ſanctifying influence of the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt? If you be delivered from the law, as it is the ſtrength of ſin, you have ſome time or other experienced, that the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt hath a ſanctifying effect; and this it hath, when the ſenſe of pardoning mercy melts the heart for ſin; when the faith of forgiveneſs draws forth heart-lothing of ſin, and heart-love to holineſs; and when the apprehenſion of the mercy, love, and grace of God, quickens the ſoul to a lively performance of duty, and enlarges the heart to run the way of God's commandments.

4. What experience have you of the ſanctifying promiſes of the goſpel? That they contribute to the ſtrength of holineſs, is evident from 2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Pet. i. 4. Was ever a promiſe applied with power and majeſty to your heart? If ſo, then, what effect had it? Did you not ſee your own helliſh nature, even to ſelf-abhorrence? and, was not the deſire of your ſoul after the participation of the divine nature, excited to ſuch a degree, that, perhaps, you could have wiſhed rather to die, than not to be holy; and your breathing was, O to be holy! O to be like unto Chriſt! O to have all heart-plagues healed, and all ſpiritual maladies cured.

5. What experience have you of the ſanctifying principles, truths, tenets, and doctrines of the goſpel? "Ye ſhall know the truth, ſays Chriſt, and the truth ſhall make you free;" free from the ruling power of ſin; free from the bondage of the law; at liberty to ſerve the Lord; free from that ſlavery to ſin and Satan, that the reſt of the world are under, who want the true knowledge of the ſanctifying principles and doctrines of the goſpel, Eph. iv. 19, 20, 21.; where we ſee, that the knowledge of the goſpel directs to another courſe than the world

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take; ſome are altogether ignorant of the ſanctifying principles of the goſpel, others have a head-knowledge and notion of ſome goſpel-principles, but no ſanctifying knowledge thereof; theſe abuſe the grace of God to licentiouſneſs. But, what experience have you of the power of goſpel-truth, and the ſanctifying virtue of goſpel-doctrine? If the grace of God has taught you nothing but looſeneſs, you have no true knowledge of it; for it teaches otherwiſe, Titus ii. 12. Did never the doctrine of Chriſt's death and reſurrection, as the Lord our righteouſneſs, tend to beget you to a new and lively hope? Did you never feel the power of that doctrine for killing ſin? Examine your experience by that of Paul, who deſired to know more and more of Chriſt, and the power of his reſurrection. Phil. iii. 10. compared with 1 Pet. i. 3.

6. What experince have you of the ſanctifying privileges of the goſpel? Goſpel-privileges, enjoyed by believers, are the foundation of goſpel-holineſs. By the law of works, obedience was firſt to take place, and then privileges; but by the goſpel of grace, priviliges firſt come in, and thereupon obedience influenced thereby. Have you experienced goſpel-joys and comforts in the Lord, inſomuch that the joy of the Lord was your ſtrenth? Goſpel-conſolation is a great furtherance of goſpel-ſanctification. Have you ever experienced a goſpel-day; I mean not a day of preaching only, but a day of power? Why then, ſurely willingneſs to ſerve the Lord in holineſs was wrought; "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power."—But not to enlarge this uſe further, I come to cloſe with a word, by way of Exhortation.

And our Exhortation ſhall be firſt to unbelievers, that are under the law, and ſo under the commanding and condemning ſtrength of ſin. Oh! Sirs, do not ſtay there; for it is a fearful ſtate, to be under the law, and under the power of ſin: if you die in that ſtate, you muſt bear the weight of your ſins for ever; and, how dreadful will it be, when God ſhall open the treaſures of his wrath, and ſhut the bowels of his mercy for ever upon you! O unbelievers! ſee the neceſſity of fleeing to *Chriſt and his* righteouſneſs: think not to pleaſe God

by

by your own feeble endeavours; there is but one way in all the world to get from under the law-curſe, and ſo from under ſin's ruining power, and that is, to get in to Chriſt, who hath fulfilled, and is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth. Where there is but one way, there is no room for conſultation: were there many ways to heaven, you might conſult which to take; but there is only one, Chriſt the way, the truth, and the life; there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin. If a man were fallen into a great pit, full of ſnakes, and ſerpents, and fire, and all that can be imagined terrible and dreadful; and there comes one, and caſts a rope into this deep pit; will there be need of arguments to perſuade the man to take hold of it? He is in a miſerable caſe, and there is no other way to help him: even ſo here, you are in a pit full of ſnakes, and ſerpents, and fire, the power of Satan, the ſting of ſin, the fire of God's wrath; you are in a manner in hell already; and God has ſent his Son, with a law-biding righteouſneſs in him; he lets down this rope, that poor periſhing ſinners may lay hold upon it: what will you do in this caſe? will you put off time, ſaying, What ſhall I do? when there is no other way left for you, but to come to Chriſt, as the Lord your righteouſneſs. Alas! ſtand not trifling and dallying till you go to the devil in hell, as many do. Will you take adviſement till the next year, when, for ought you know, you may be in hell the next hour? Are you brought to that queſtion, "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?" There is no other anſwer in the world to be given to it, but this one, "Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and you ſhall be ſaved;" deſpair of life by the law, as you would not live under the ruling, and die under the damning ſtrength of ſin: but repair to the goſpel, by applying the promiſe thereof; for there is exhibite to you the ſaving ſtrength of Chriſt. Give up with the old covenant of works; for there ſin reigns, through want of righteouſneſs, to eternal death: but take hold of the new covenant of promiſe; for there grace reigns, through righteouſneſs, unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, Rom. v. 21. Be content not to think of paying a farthing of your own debt to the law,

and

and to be obliged to Chriſt for paying it all for you. To believe in Chriſt, is to come out from under the law, that you may be under grace: and to come under grace, is to be ſubject to it, ſo as to be content to be in grace's debt, and that grace do all for you and in you, and that grace be glorified in you, and Chriſt glorified in grace, and God glorified in Chriſt. May the power of grace perſuade you to flee to Chriſt, and out from under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin.—I might here adduce manifold motives and directions; but, referring you to other parallel ſubjects, and having enlarged ſo much beyond my intent in the preceding parts of this diſcourſe, I haſten to a concluſion.—Therefore,

2*dly*, I would offer a ſhort word of exhortation to believers, that are *not* under the law, and ſo are delivered from the ſtrength of ſin. O let it be your care to ſtudy conformity to the law as a rule of life, ſince you are graciouſly delivered from it as a covenant of life: give evidence, that being delivered from the law, you are delivered from the ſtrength of ſin: ſhake off the power and dominion of it; you are under ſtronger obligations to mortify ſin than any in the world; yea, than Adam in a ſtate of innocency; for you are not under the law that he was under, but under grace; and grace hath brought you to poſſeſs a more glorious and honourable righteouſneſs than ever Adam could have yielded, though he had never violate the covenant of works. Grace gives you more encouragement to obey the law, as a rule, than ever Adam had to obey it, as a covenant. You have ſuch grace as Adam never had in that ſtate, even grace in a better hand, where it can never be loſt. Adam never had a title to life by the covenant of works, becauſe he failed in the condition: but you have a title to life, and the condition alſo in your Head: "Will you ſin, becauſe you are under grace? God forbid." Will you turn looſe, and carnal, and formal, becauſe you are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Will you hate God, becauſe he loves you? Oh! monſtrous ingratitude! Becauſe God has *a regard for* your happineſs, will you have no regard

to his honour? Becauſe he is gracious, will you be ungrateful? Alas! *Tell it not in Gath!*—Has grace juſtified you, and will you not evidence your juſtification by your ſanctification?—Has grace adopted you, and will you not be followers of God as dear children?—Has grace given you the hope of glory, and will you not, having this hope, purify yourſelf, even as he is pure!—Has grace given you all the promiſes, and will you not, having theſe promiſes, cleanſe yourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God?—O give evidence that you are not under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin; but under grace, which is the ſtrength of holineſs. If you be under grace, ſurely you will have a regard to the glory of God, and to the credit of grace, that the goſpel of grace be not reproached as an Antinomian doctrine of licentiouſneſs. We call you to mortify ſin, and ſtudy holineſs and conformity to the law, as a rule of life, as you have a regard to the love and grace of God, and to your own peace and comfort; for, "Great peace have they that love his law:" as you have a regard to the welfare of others, and their conviction and converſion; and as you have a regard to your family and poſterity, and would entail a bleſſing on following generations, and leave a bleſſing behind you. In a word, it is by your holineſs of heart and life, that the power of grace is ſeen, the truth of grace is tried, the beauty of grace is diſcovered, and the comfort of grace is felt, as I noticed on a former occaſion. The power of grace will not be ſeen, if you be not holy, and if it be not ſo powerful, as to make the hardeſt command eaſy to you: The truth of grace will not be evident to you, if you be not holy; for ſin will caſt a cloud over it: The beauty of grace will not appear to others, if you be not holy; they will ſay, You are juſt like neighbour and other, if you do not ſhew your faith by your works: The comfort of grace will not accrue to you, if you be not holy; it is they that walk in the fear of the Lord, that walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt. The ſweets of religion, and the exerciſe of it go together. Go therefore in the ſtrength of grace, leaning upon your Beloved, ſetting the ſtrength

of Chriſt, who is the Lord your righteouſneſs, againſt the ſtrength of ſin, which is the law. The more firm and fixed that a man's faith is, with reſpect to Chriſt, as the end of the law for righteouſneſs, the more faſt will he follow the Lord in the works of holineſs; for the true believer hath two feet, as I have formerly ſaid elſewhere, like the feet of a pair of compaſſes, the one foot ſtands faſt in the centre, and the other draws the line, and goes round; now, if the foot that is in the centre do not ſtand firm and fixed, if it move out of its place while the line is a drawing, then the other foot can never make an exact circle: ſo here, the believer hath two feet, the one is the aſſured faith of juſtifying grace, this ſhould be ſtill firmly fixed in its centre Chriſt, the Lord our righteouſneſs; the other foot is goſpel-obedience, and a holy walk influenced by faith, and this ſhould be always moving about in the work of the Lord, and running its holy round of ſpiritual duties: now, if one foot, namely, the faith of juſtifying grace, be not fixed, and firmly eſtabliſhed in its centre, then the other foot, namely, that of obedience, cannot perform its motion with any exactneſs. While a believer is fixed in the faith of God's grace and love, then this love conſtrains him to obedience; but when his faith begins to waver and totter, and he begins to jealouſe the Lord's love, and to deny his grace, then he loſes his heart, and ſtrength, and courage; and ſo, by an evil heart of unbelief, departs from the living God. O then, ſeek to be firmly fixed in the faith of divine grace, and in the full aſſurance of your privilege, that you are not under the law, but under grace; then ſhall you be able to mortify ſin with ſucceſs. And, ſeeing the moſt thankful believer is the moſt obedient, entertain ſtill a thankful remembrance of your merciful deliverance from the law, and let the apoſtle's ſong of victory in the text be much in your hearts and mouths, "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

SER-

SERMON LXXIX.

GOD's Great Name, the Ground and Reaſon of ſaving Great Sinners.*

PSALM cvi. 8.

Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake.

MY friends, the ſacramental cup that ſome of you have in view, is a cup of ſalvation; and thoſe that adventure to take that cup into their hand, had need to be perſons duly informed, and heartily concerned about ſalvation. The very firſt piece of heart-exerciſe in all that are effectually convinced and awakened to a ſenſe of ſin and fear of wrath, is that or the like queſtion, ariſing from the bottom of the heart; *Men and brethren, what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Surely they are not fit for a communion-table, who have never yet come this length in religion, ſo as to be more concerned about ſalvation, and the reſolution of this queſtion, than ever they were about any temporal concern in the world; for ſuch as ſtand fair to be worthy communicants, they have come yet a greater length than this, namely, to get that queſtion reſolved to their ſatisfaction, and their mind ſpiritually enlightened in the knowledge of the method of ſalvation through Chriſt, ſo as to ſee upon what terms, and for what reaſon it is that God ſaves them; and particularly, that there is no reaſon why he ſhould ſave them, unleſs he bring the reaſon from himſelf, that it

* This ſubject was finiſhed in one ſermon, preached at Carnock, July 18th, 1730. before the adminiſtration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper.

will not be for their ſake, but for his own. God's great end, in all his works, is the glory of his own name; and eſpecially his work of ſaving ſinners through Chriſt; and that which makes it a great work, is, becauſe his great name is ſo much concerned therein, and magnified thereby, that it is not ſo greatly glorified any other way, as it is here. God propoſes, in this work, that the loftineſs of man ſhall be brought down, and the Lord alone exalted; and hence all whom he ſaves, he humbles them ſo low for their ſin and wickedneſs, as that to bring them to this acknowledgement, that, if even God ſave them, it will be owing, not unto them, not unto them, but unto his own glorious name. What thought and concern about ſalvation ye have, I know not; but if ye be of theſe that believe, to the ſaving of your ſouls, you will ſee ſo much of your own ſinfulneſs and guiltineſs before God, that you will be brought to deſpair of ſalvation in any other way, and upon any other account, than that which was his method of ſaving Iſrael of old; *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake.*

How this people ſinned, we are told in the two preceding verſes; and how God ſaved them, we are told here in the text; *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake.* The more full hiſtory of their ſinning, even in the extremity of danger they were in, and of God's ſaving them at the Red-ſea, ye have Exod. xiv. throughout. And concerning this wonderful ſalvation, there are four things ye may notice in the words.

1. We have a glorious Saviour in the pronoun, *He*, namely, JEHOVAH, the great God, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, the Angel of the covenant, that appeared to Moſes in the buſh, and delivered Iſrael by the hand of Moſes. He is the Saviour; even he that ſays, "Look unto me, and be ſaved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe."

2. The grievous ſinners whom he ſaved, in the word, THEM; *He ſaved them:* namely, the Iſraelites, his profeſſing people, when they were in great peril, having the Red-ſea before them, the rude enemy behind them, *and inacceſſible* mountains on each ſide of them: in the greateſt

greateſt extremity, and yet a ſinful people; ſinning againſt God even in that extremity; yet, he ſaved them.

3. The great argument that moved him to ſave them, or upon what account he thus appeared; it was, for his name's ſake; that is, for his own ſake, as Hezekiah prays to be ſaved from Sennacherib, Iſa. xxxvii. 20. "That all the kingdoms of the earth may know, that thou art the Lord, even thou only:" or, for thy name's ſake; that is, for thy glory's ſake, Pſal. lxxix. 9. "Help us, O God of our ſalvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our ſins, for thy name's ſake:" That is, alſo for thy mercy's ſake, for thy goodneſs ſake; or, becauſe they were called by his name; this is urged, Jer. xiv. 9.—"Thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us, and we are called by thy name, leave us not."

4. The marvellous nature and circumſtance of this ſalvation, in the word, Nevertheleſs; the glory of divine mercy is herein magnified, that he ſaved them for his name's ſake, with a *non obſtante*, with a nevertheleſs; that is, notwithſtanding all their ſin, tho' their ſin cried to God, not to ſave them, but to damn them; not to help them, but to deſtroy them; *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake*, notwithſtanding their provocations.

OBSERV. That when God ſaves ſinners, or a ſinful people, he does it for his *name's ſake*, notwithſtanding their provocation, whereby they forfeit his help, and deſerve deſtruction.

I ſhall *Firſt* premiſe ſome general poſitions for clearing the text and doctrine. *Secondly*, Illuſtrate the truth of the doctrine, from ſome parallel texts of ſcripture.

1*ſt*, I ſhall premiſe ſome general poſitions for clearing the text and doctrine.

Firſt poſition. "That the ſalvation and temporal deliverance that God, for his name's ſake, wrought for Iſrael of old, in bringing them out of Egypt through the Red-ſea to Canaan, was typical of the great ſalvation from ſin and wrath, to eternal life, thro' Jeſus Chriſt;" which ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation this text itſelf leads me to ſpeak of, not excluding the temporal deliverance, re-

remarkable appearances of divine providence, for the visible church in general. As Israel's sin and provocation, and the judgments that came on them for the same, was our example and warning-piece, 1 Cor. x. 6.; and great destructions happened for ensamples and types, ver. 11. "And written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come:" so the great deliverances God wrought for them, were types of the great salvation that God works for sinners, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of the glory of his grace; or, For his name's sake.

Second Position. "Many unconverted persons, in the visible church, may be delivered from temporal judgments, and saved of God only in outward respects, and that for his name's sake; so doubtless, many unconverted persons were among the Israelites; yea, most of them gave discoveries that they were so." They forfeited his help in many respects; yet he saved them in many respects, for his name's sake. See Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 23. "Thus saith the Lord, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel; but for my holy name's sake:—Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God; be it known unto you." Their slavery was so great, that it opened the mouth of the heathen, as if the God of Israel were no God; therefore God, for his name's sake, helped them. See also Deut. ix. 5. Israel was bad enough, but the heathen were no better, but rather worse; therefore, for his name's sake, he appeared. Many whom God will not be merciful to in the world, may yet, for his name's sake, be delivered in time.

Third Position. "Gracious souls do too much forfeit God's help in time of danger, and deserve to be forsaken of God, and exposed to misery; yet, for his name's sake, he saved them;" this is their acknowledgment, as you see in Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies.* Even so does the church acknowledge, Ezra ix. 8. 13. and Lam. iii. 22. *It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed.* And again,

Fourth Position. "God may punish his people dolefully, whom yet, for his name's sake, he will not destroy;" as in these instances just now recited. See Jer.

xxx. 10.

xxx. 10. God may puniſh his people for their ſin ſeverely, whom yet he will ſave eternally, for his name's ſake; yea, and puniſh them more than others, Amos iv. 6,—13. and iii. 2. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities." Thoſe whom, for his name's ſake, he ſaved from ſin to eternity, he will make them feel it to be an evil and bitter thing in time.

Fifth Poſition is, "God may ſave a viſible church, in many outward reſpects, for the ſake of his name, which he reſolves to magnify, eſpecially, in behalf of his inviſible remnant among them, his hidden ones;" Iſa. i. 10. "Except the Lord of hoſts had left unto us a very ſmall remnant, we ſhould have been as Sodom, and we ſhould have been like unto Gomorrah." Many are ſaved with a temporal ſalvation, for the ſake of thoſe whom God reſolves, for his name's ſake to ſave with eternal ſalvation. Hence it is ſaid, with reſpect to the day of outward calamity, that, for the elect's ſake, theſe days ſhall be ſhortened. The wicked are more obliged to God's people than they are aware of. Hence,

Sixth Poſition is, "That that ſalvation, wherein God's name is moſt concerned, is ſalvation in Chriſt Jeſus to eternal life;" wherein he brings ſinners from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; from death to life; from a hell of ſin and miſery to a heaven of holineſs and happineſs.——Having propoſed theſe things ſhortly for clearing the text and doctrine in the general; before I proceed to the particular parts thereof, I ſhall,

2*dly*, Prove the doctrine by ſcripture inſtances; Ezek. xx. 8, 9. Read 1 Sam. xii. 22. Iſa. xlviii. 22. 25. Conſider, for this purpoſe, God's promiſes; ſuch as, Iſa. xlviii. 8, 9. 11. His people's prayers; ſuch as, Jer. xiv. 7. But an induction of particulars, to this purpoſe, may afterwards occur for the confirmation.

Now having premiſed ſome things, and confirmed the doctrine, the method may be as follows,

I. To enquire what is that name of God, for the ſake of which he ſaves.

II. What it is for God to ſave for his name's ſake.
III. What ſalvation he works for his name's ſake.
IV. What is imported in this *Nevertheleſs*; or, in God's ſaving with a *notwithſtanding*; and ſo over what impediments, real provocations, and ſeeming impoſſibility, he brings about this ſalvation for his name's ſake.
V. Offer ſome reaſons why he thus ſaves for his name's ſake.
VI. Deduce ſome inferences from the whole, for the application.

I. I am to enquire what is the name of God, for the ſake of which he ſaves. And,

1. By the name of God we may underſtand his being, or God himſelf; Deut. xxviii. 58. "That thou mayeſt fear this glorious and dreadful name, *The Lord thy God.*" Our Lord Jeſus commands his apoſtles, to go and teach [or, *diſcipline*] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, Matth. xxviii. 19. Whatever then is intended by the name of God, each of the adorable perſons of the glorious Trinity, are equally concerned therein. It is a name common to them all; and in this ſenſe they have not diſtinct or diverſe names; for it is not ſimply the name Father, and the name Son, and the name Holy Ghoſt that is intended, but the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God. By the name of God then, is meant God himſelf; and to ſave, for his name's ſake, is to ſave for his own ſake, as he ſays, Iſa. xliii. 20. "I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for mine own ſake." We find the names of things, taken for the things themſelves; "A few names in Sardis;" that is, a few perſons.

2. By the name of God, we may underſtand the authority of God; that is, his abſolute right and power to do what he pleaſes with his own creatures. He hath right to order, and power to execute, whatſoever he will concerning them: "My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure," Iſa. xlvi. 10.; ſo that when he ſaves, for

for his name's ſake, he ſaves for the ſake of his ſovereign will and pleaſure, and for manifeſting his own abſolute authority; his right and might to effectuate what he pleaſes.

3. By the name of God, we may underſtand the Chriſt of God; for in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the whole name and authority of God; Exod. xxiii. 21. "Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your tranſgreſſions; for my name is in him." But in caſe any ſhould think, Is it not a part of God's name, that he pardons iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin? Why then is it ſaid of Chriſt, "He will not pardon your iniquity, for my name is in him?" I anſwer, The pardon here is not a pardon that reſpects condemnation, and freedom from hell; but, caſtigation, as a father is ſaid to pardon a child, when he will not ſpare the rod, nor forbear to chaſten: thus he will not pardon your iniquity, without taking vengeance on your inventions; "For my name is in him;" *i.e.* my authority is in him. Chriſt is the very name of God; and when he pardons for his name's ſake, he pardons for his Chriſt's ſake: thus the Old-Teſtament ſaints, as they uſed to pray to be ſaved of God, for his name's ſake, ſo they ſometime pray for his word's ſake, 2 Sam. vii. 21.; that is, for Chriſt's ſake, the Word that was made fleſh; for the ſame prayer is rendered, "For thy Servant's ſake," 1 Chron. xvii. 19. To this purpoſe, Pſalm lxxxiv. 9. David's prayer is, "Behold, O God, our Shield; look upon the face of thine Anointed:" And Daniel's prayer is, 'For the Lord's ſake,' Dan. ix. 17. And, O but God hath done much, and will do much for Chriſt; becauſe his name is in him, and in him he is well-pleaſed and reconciled.

4. By the name of God we are to underſtand, the attributes of God. I ſhall mention ſome of theſe.

(1.) His Power is his name, and for the ſake of that he ſaves, as in the text; "He ſaved them for his name's ſake, that he might make his mighty power known." Compare Exod. xix. 16. and Rom. ix. 17. For this cauſe God raiſed up Pharaoh, that he might ſhew his mighty power in him, that his name might be declared throughout all the earth, even his mighty power in ſaving of Iſrael out

of

of his hand. This argument Moſes makes uſe of, to divert God's threatened wrath, Numb. xiv. 15, 16. This is the name God manifeſts to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1. "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect." And the three children, Dan. iii. 17. have recourſe to this name; "Our God whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us." If there be any thing that ſtands in the way of the accompliſhment of his promiſes, he is able to remove it; ſo Abraham's faith fixed here, Rom. iv. 21. "Being thus perſuaded, that he that had promiſed, was able alſo to perform." When God ſaves for his name's ſake, it is for the ſake of his power, to ſhew, that he is able to do above all that we are able to aſk or think; that he is able to do above our wants, above our deſerts, above our prayers, and above our thoughts: we cannot want more than he can give: we cannot pray for ſo much as he can beſtow; we are not able to think what he can do. God's power is a part of his name, that faith may take hold of for ſalvation, and flee unto, even when there is no explicite view of his will; thus ſaith the leper, "If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean." I cannot tell if he will help me, a ſoul may ſay, but I know he is able, and I am called to truſt in his powerful name, and to take hold of his ſtrength, Iſa. xxvi. 24. chap. xxvii. 5. While you can do no better, it is good to truſt in his power, and put his will in his own diſcretion, and refer that to himſelf; that ſoul is not far behind.

(2.) His Mercy is another part of his name: when he ſaves for his name's ſake, he ſaves for his mercy's ſake; "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy," Micah vii. 18. He is, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious*, Exod. xxxiii. 6. He ſo far delights in mercy, that mercy rejoices over judgment, James ii. 13. Hence the Pſalmiſt's prayer is, Pſalm vi. 4. "Return, O Lord, deliver my ſoul, for thy mercy's ſake:" and, Pſalm lxxix. 8. "O remember not againſt us former iniquities; let thy tender mercy ſpeedily *prevent* us, for we are brought very low:" and, ver. 9.

"Help,

"Help, O God of our ſalvation, for the glory of thy name; deliver us, and purge away our ſins, for thy name's ſake." David had fainted, unleſs he had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord, Pſal. xxvii. 13. Out of a ſenſe of miſery, we ought to go to the fountain of mercy, and ſo look to be ſaved for his name's ſake.

(3.) His Wiſdom is another part of his name: "The Lord is a God of knowledge, by him actions are weighed," 1 Sam. ii. 3.: Yea, *His underſtanding is infinite.* The pſalmiſt takes up the wiſdom of God as his name, and for the ſake thereof ſeeks to be led and guided; "For thy name's ſake lead me and guide me," Pſalm xxxi. 3. God, in ſaving ſinners, through Chriſt, has ſuch a regard to his name, as a God of infinite wiſdom, that in this method of ſalvation, the manifold wiſdom of God is ſhown, Eph. iii. 10.

(4.) His Truth and Faithfulneſs is another part of his name, for the ſake of which he ſaves and ſhews mercy; "His mercies are new every morning: great is thy faithfulneſs," Lam. iii. 3. It is declared to be one of the capital letters of his name, Exod. xxxiv. 6. *Abundant in goodneſs and truth:* and hence, how often did God remember, toward Iſrael, his promiſe to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, notwithſtanding their ſin? Read Pſalm cv. 8, 9, 10. 2 Kings xiii. 23. And, O what will not God do for his truth's ſake, for his promiſe' ſake! for, *He is not man that he ſhould lye.* He that, for his mercy's ſake, makes the promiſe, will, for his truth's ſake accompliſh it; "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou haſt ſworn unto our fathers from the days of old," Micah vii. 20. In ſaving ſinners, thro' Chriſt, his truth is exceedingly manifeſted: his truth in fulfilling the threatening of the law upon the Surety, in the room of the ſinner: his truth in fulfilling the promiſes of the goſpel, that are all Yea and Amen in Chriſt; his truth and faithfulneſs in fulfilling the promiſe made to Chriſt in the eternal compact; which may be part of the meaning of that word, Rom. iii. 25. "To declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſin," through that propitiation: when God forgives ſin through his blood, he declares his righteouſneſs and

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faithfulneſs in his promiſe made to Chriſt, with reference to his ſeeing his ſeed, upon his giving his ſoul an offering for ſin, Iſa. liii. 10.

(5.) His juſtice is another part of his name, for the ſake of which he ſaves, and works ſalvation. The juſtice of God may be viewed as either retributive or vindictive: Retributive juſtice is that for the ſake of which he ſaves either more generally, or in a more ſpecial way: In a general way, even ſome wicked ſinners in the viſible church may be unjuſtly oppreſſed by their enemies that are more wicked than they, as Iſrael was by the Egyptians; therefore God righteouſly took vengeance on them, and delivered Iſrael. In a ſpecial way it may be viewed in the ſaints themſelves, who are ſinners; yet, becauſe objects of promiſed mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, therefore he ſaves and delivers for his righteouſneſs and juſtice' ſake; "Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's ſake: for thy righteouſneſs ſake bring my ſoul out of trouble," Pſal. cxliii. 11. Thus he is ſaid to uphold his people with the right-hand of his righteouſneſs, Iſa. xli. 10.—His vindictive juſtice is alſo that for the ſake whereof he ſaves, upon the ſuppoſition of its having got full ſatisfaction; and ſo we ordinarily underſtand, Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of the ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God." It is ordinary for people to ſeek to be ſaved for his mercy's ſake; but believing views of juſtice ſatisfied, and God reconciled in Chriſt, would make the ſoul as freely and boldly ſeek to be ſaved for juſtice's ſake in and through Chriſt the atonement, in whom that name of God, Juſtice, hath more glorious ſatisfaction than ever it will have in the damnation of ſinners. This is expreſsly God's name, Exod. xxxiv. 7. "Keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin; and that will by no means clear the guilty:" that is, in diſpenſing mercy, he will be ſo far from diſpenſing with juſtice, that, by no means, will he ſhew mercy, in pardoning ſin to the ſinner, without the higheſt reſpect to juſtice, in puniſhing ſin in the Surety, *in whom his* vindictive juſtice, taking vengeance on ſin,

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is ſo cleared and vindicated, that when he pardons ſin, through Chriſt, he is as juſt in pardoning ſin, as he is merciful in doing ſo; for he has ſo ordained it, to the glory of his great name, "That he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of them that believe in Jeſus."

(6.) His Holineſs is a part of his name, for the ſake of which he ſaves. This is declared to be his name, Exod. xv. 11. "Who is like unto thee, glorious in holineſs." Iſa. lvii. 15. "The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy." For the ſake of this he pities and ſaves, Ezek. xxxvi. 21. "But I had pity, for my holy name's ſake, which the houſe of Iſrael had profaned among the heathen:" Hence read, ver. 22. 'I do not this for your ſake, but for mine holy name's ſake.' God, in ſaving ſinners, thro' Chriſt's righteouſneſs, hath his holineſs, in the precept of the law, as much magnified by the active obedience of Chriſt, as his juſtice in the threatening of the law is magnified by his paſſive obedience.

I might here mention the Providence of God, as a part of his name, his watchful care over his people; "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in their behalf," 2 Chron. xvi. 9. He rules and over-rules all for their good.—I might mention his Titles, whereby he is deſigned; ſuch as, "The Lord of hoſts; the mighty God; the King of kings."—And I might likewiſe notice his Word, which he is ſaid to magnify above all his name. But, in a word, as the name is that by which any thing or perſon is known; ſo the name of God is the very thing whereby he makes himſelf known; whether it be in his titles, attributes, ordinances, words, or works. He hath made himſelf known by his works of creation and providence; but a thouſand times more clearly in the work of redemption and ſalvation; herein appear, not only thoſe attributes that ſhine in creation and providence, but alſo ſome perfection of the divine nature, that would not have been diſplayed, in caſe the firſt covenant had ſtood; ſuch as the infinite mercy and patience of God toward guilty ſinners: nor ſuch a pitch of condeſcenſion as he hath here diſcovered; nay, nor any other attribute had ſhined forth in ſuch luſtre and beauty as here it doth: therefore, while Satan thought to have deleted the name of

God

God, that he wrote upon the creature at firſt, behold how infinite wiſdom counteracts him, and makes that the occaſion of making his name more known than before. Theſe attributes of God, therefore, that are diſplayed in the new covenant of grace, and exerted in the ſalvation of ſinners according to that covenant, is that name of God that is principally here to be conſidered.

II. The Second thing was, To ſhew, what it is for God to ſave for his name's ſake; or, for the ſake of his name. Having cleared what his name is: What is it, I ſay, for God to ſave for his name's ſake?

In general, beſide what has been ſaid, God's ſaving for his name's ſake, imports, I think, his making his name the ALL of our ſalvation, becauſe the ſinful creature is nothing, hath nothing, will do nothing, can do nothing in the affair of his own ſalvation; therefore God himſelf will be all, and do all: Iſa. lix. 16. and Iſa. lxiii. 5. "He looked, and there was none to help: therefore his own arm brought ſalvation." Thus God deſigned to ſhew himſelf to be *all in all.*—More particularly,

1. For God to ſave for his name's ſake, is to make his name the motive whence he ſaves. What moved him to ſave any guilty ſinner? It is his name; his own mercy moved him; his own grace moved him; his own bowels of pity and compaſſion moved him; his own love moved him; his own name moved him: "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life."

2. For God to ſave for his name's ſake, is to make his name the reaſon why he ſaves. Tho' his name be the motive, yet ſome may think there is ſurely ſome reaſon drawn from the creature: Arminians ſay, that it was the foreſight of faith and good works, that he foreſaw ſome would be better than others, and improve the means better; and for this reaſon he would ſave them: but the word of God ſays otherwiſe, Deut. vii. 7, 8. God loves ſinners, becauſe he loves them. His ſovereign mercy is the cauſe of his ſhewing mercy; "I will *have mercy on* whom I will have mercy," Rom. ix. 15.

3. To

3. To ſave for his name's ſake, is to make his name the matter of their ſalvation, in as much as his name itſelf is their ſalvation. His name is their ſtrong tower, Prov. xviii. 10. His name, *the eternal God* himſelf, is their refuge, Deut. xxxiii. 27. Inſomuch, that whom he ſaves, they have not only ſalvation from him, but in him; "Iſrael ſhall be ſaved *in* the Lord with an everlaſting ſalvation," Iſa. xlv. 17. Chriſt, therefore, who calls us to look to him, and be ſaved, he himſelf is the ſalvation of the ſinner. "Now mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation," ſaid old Simeon, Luke ii. 29. "Behold thy ſalvation cometh," ſays God, Iſa. lxii. 11. Chriſt is not only the helper, but the help itſelf; "O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thine help," Hoſ. xiii. 9. See Pſalm xviii. 2. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortreſs, and my deliverer: my God, my ſtrength, in whom I will truſt; my buckler and the horn of my ſalvation, and my high tower. He is given for a covenant of the people, a light to the Gentiles," Iſa. xlix. 6, 7. Again,

4. To ſave for his name's ſake, is to make his name the means of ſalvation; and ſo it muſt be, if his name itſelf be the *all* of our ſalvation. By what means doth he ſave? It is even by his name: By whom doth Jacob ariſe but by the God of Jacob? By whom are ſinners ſaved, but by the name of God, by the Chriſt of God? And, "There is none other name given under heaven whereby we muſt be ſaved," Acts iv. 12. No man comes to the Father, but by him as the Way, by him as the Leader, and as the name of God.

5. To ſave for his name's ſake, is to make his name the meaſure of our ſalvation: he will, therefore, ſave as far as his name and honour is engaged by promiſe to Chriſt, or to his people in him; 1 Kings viii. 56. Read alſo Joſh. xxi. 45. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had ſpoken unto the houſe of Iſrael; all came to paſs. Thus God ſaves his people in particular caſes, as far as his name, and faithfulneſs, and truth is concerned; "God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13.

6. To

6. To ſave for his name's ſake, is to make his name the end of our ſalvation, even the glory of his name; the great end he propoſes in ſaving, is even the praiſe of the glory of his grace, Eph. i. 6. The praiſe of the glory of his wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and truth. This is the great end of God in his work of ſaving ſinners through Chriſt; "This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe," Iſa. xliii. 21. Chriſt's grand prayer, when he was accompliſhing the work of our ſalvation and redemption, was, "Father, glorify thy name." And here let us ſtay a little, and admire the great deſign that God had in hand in ſaving, *for his name's ſake.* God's chief end herein being the glory and honour of his name, What is that? Why,

(1.) In ſaving for his name's ſake, he deſigns the manifeſtation of his name, the declaration of his name, as it is ſaid, Rom. iii. 25. "To declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, thro' the forbearance of God;" to make known his name in every ſalvation of Iſrael, or of his church, his great deſign ſtill is, that his name may be known, declared, publiſhed, and proclaimed.

(2.) In ſaving for his name's ſake, he deſigns the vindication of his name. His name is abuſed and reproached in the world, which is filled with harſh thoughts of God, as if he were either unjuſt, or unmerciful; therefore, in ſaving for his name's ſake, he will vindicate his name, "That he may be juſt when he ſpeaks, and clear when he judges," Pſal. li. 4. That he may appear to be not only merciful, in ſaving; but alſo juſt, and the juſtifier of them that believe in Jeſus: and as juſt in ſaving believing ſinners, that flee to his name, as he is juſt in damning unbelieving impenitent ſinners.

(3.) In ſaving for his name's ſake, he deſigns the exaltation of his name; "I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth," Pſal. xlvi. 10. He deſigns that the right-hand of the Lord ſhould be exalted in doing valiantly, Pſal. cxviii. 16.; and make mention that his name is exalted, Iſa. xii. 4. "Therefore will he *be exalted,* that he may have mercy on you," Iſa. xxx. 18.

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Wherefore hath God exalted Chriſt to his right-hand, but that his name may be exalted in him? "Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God: that at the name [*or, in* the name] of Jeſus, every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," Phil. ii. 6. 10. On which account, God hath highly exalted him to the glory of God the Father. And wherefore does he ſave, and glorify, and exalt any ſinner thro' Chriſt, but that his name may be glorified and exalted.

(4.) In ſaving ſinners for his name's ſake, he deſigns the pleaſure of his name; that his name ſhould not only be exalted but delighted in, becauſe it delights in ſhewing mercy, thro' Chriſt, Micah vii. 18. We read of the good pleaſure of his will, Eph. i. 5. the good pleaſure of his goodneſs, 2 Theſ. i. 11. God being infinitely well-pleaſed in Chriſt, he takes pleaſure in giving out of his goodneſs through him; and he ſaves to the good pleaſure of his name, and to the contentment of all his attributes; to the good pleaſure of his goodneſs, the good pleaſure of his grace, the good pleaſure of his holineſs, the good pleaſure of his juſtice, the good pleaſure of his truth and faithfulneſs: all the perfections of God are well-pleaſed; "Mercy and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other," Pſal. lxxxv. 10.

(5.) In ſaving ſinners for his name's ſake, he deſigns the aggrandizing of his name; I mean, that his name ſhould not only be glorified and exalted, but magnified to the higheſt, according to the ſong of the angel upon the coming of the Saviour; "Glory to God in the higheſt, on earth peace, and good-will towards men," Luke ii. 14. His name is magnified to the higheſt in this way of ſalvation through Chriſt. Damnation is but the loweſt way, wherein God is glorified of ſinners, and it is to their eternal ruin. Let ſinners conſider this, that they may not go on in the road to hell, but may fall in love with that way, wherein God is glorified and magnified to the higheſt. For, herein God is glorified by the higheſt perſon, his eternal Son, in his doing and dying, and riſing and reigning, and mediating at his right-hand;

glorified in the higheſt place, with the higheſt praiſe, in the higheſt manner, and to the higheſt degree.

(6.) In ſaving ſinners for his name's ſake, he deſigns the eternalizing of his name; "It ſhall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlaſting ſign that ſhall not be cut off," Iſa. lv. 13. that is, that his name may be celebrated with Hallelujahs of praiſe to all eternity: "The glory of the Lord ſhall endure for ever; the Lord ſhall rejoice in his works, Pſal. civ. 31. Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever, and thy memorial throughout all generations," Pſ. cxxxv. 13. Chriſt, the Saviour, was ſet up from everlaſting, that the ſinner ſaved of God in him might praiſe him to everlaſting: "His name ſhall endure for ever;" and his ranſomed ſhall come to Zion with everlaſting ſongs, ſaying, "Salvation to our God that ſits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever," Rev. vii. 12.

QUEST. What is it in the name of God that he hath ſuch regard to, when he ſaves for his name's ſake?

ANSW. He hath regard to his name in all the parts of it that I have already mentioned, and in every attribute, inſomuch, that no attribute ſhall be injured, but every one of them extolled more than another.—He alſo hath regard to his name in all the properties and qualities of it.—His name is a glorious name; and, in ſaving ſinners, through Chriſt, he hath regard to the glory of it; that it be glorified in the manner I have hinted at.—His name is a great name; and, in ſaving ſinners, thro' Chriſt, he hath regard to the greatneſs of it, by bringing about ſuch a great ſalvation. And, what will he not do for his great name?—His name is a holy name; and therefore, in ſaving ſinners, through Chriſt, he hath a regard to the holineſs of it; not only in ſanctifying all whom he ſaves, but in ſaving, by a righteouſneſs, whereby his holy law is not only fulfilled, but magnified and made honourable; in providing a Saviour of ſuch infinite dignity, that he caſts a luſtre on the law, by his obedience to it.—His name is a dreadful name; and therefore, in ſaving ſinners, through Chriſt, he hath ſuch a regard to the dreadfulneſs of it, that his moſt dreadful vengeance lighted upon ſin, in the perſon of *the Surety*, the Saviour, when he became a ſacrifice for

ſin.

ſin.—His name is a precious name; and therefore, in ſaving ſinners, he hath ſuch a regard to the manifeſting the precioufneſs of it, as to make it appear in the precious blood of Chriſt, which is the price of ſalvation.—His name is a bleſſed name. and he cannot be more bleſſed and happy than he is in himſelf; yet, to manifeſt the bleſſedneſs of his name, he ſaves ſinners, ſo as to ſhow he loves not to be bleſt and happy alone, but will have men to be bleſt in him, that all nations may call him bleſſed.—His name is a wonderful name, a myſterious and unſearchable name; and therefore it is ſaid, Iſa. ix. 6. *His name ſhall be called, Wonderful.* Angels have been prying into this depth, ſo many thouſand of years, and yet are not at the bottom of it, but ſtill are prying into the myſtery of the goſpel ſalvation through Chriſt; and ſuch is the regard God hath to this wonderful name, in ſaving ſinners, that every part of their ſalvation is a miracle and wonder, manifeſting the wiſdom of God in a myſtery.—In a word, his name is an everlaſting and unchangeable name; and it is his regard thereunto that makes him, by the means of his everlaſting righteouſneſs, bring about this everlaſting ſalvation.

III. The third thing propoſed in the general method, was, To ſhew what ſalvation he works for his name's ſake. Salvation is either temporal, ſpiritual, or eternal; and though God, for his name's ſake, works many temporal deliverances for his church and people, as you ſee in Iſrael here, ver. 9, 10, 11. 21, 22. 43. 45, 46. and all this for his name's ſake: alſo, he ſaved the church of Scotland many a time, for his name's ſake: he ſaved us from Paganiſm, for his name's ſake, when he firſt ſent goſpel light to our land; he ſaved us from Popery, for his name's ſake, at the glorious Reformation, which was here carried on by ſolemn National Covenants, that were the glory of our land, whatever contempt is now put upon them; he ſaved us from Prelacy, and arbitrary power and tyranny, at the merciful Revolution, for his name's ſake; and he hath ſaved us, from time to time, from many attempts of enemies that were ſeeking to

raze us to the foundation, as ſome are ſubtilly doing at this day, by damnable errors, which ſtrike at the foundation of all religion; I mean, eſpecially Arian blaſphemy *; but, whatever church ſalvation, or temporal ſalvation of this ſort to a viſible church, God works, for his name's ſake, yet it is that ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation typified by Iſrael's ſalvation, that the name of God is moſt concerned with and exalted by; therefore, I eſpecially ſpeak of this everlaſting ſalvation in Chriſt.

And therefore, if the queſtion be, What ſalvation of this ſort he works, for his name's ſake?

I anſwer, There is no part of this great ſalvation but the name of God is engraven upon it, as being what he works, for his name's ſake. I ſhall offer a few inſtances thereof; from election to glorification, all the parts of ſalvation that ly betwixt theſe two words, from everlaſting to everlaſting, are brought about for his name's ſake.

1. Wherefore did he elect any ſinners from eternity? It was for his name's ſake, to ſhew his abſolute ſovereignty in making veſſels of mercy, of whom he pleaſed; "And that he might make known the riches of his glory to them, Rom. ix. 23. He hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love. Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt, to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 4, 5, 6.

2. Wherefore did he redeem any ſinners by the blood of his eternal Son? It was for his name's ſake; Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wiſdom and prudence." The redemption of Iſrael is deſigned and ordered for the glory of the God of Iſrael; "Sing, O ye heavens,—for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himſelf in Iſrael," Iſa. xliv. 22.

3. Wherefore doth he call any ſinners effectually? It is for his name's ſake: this is illuſtrated at large by the apoſtle; "You ſee your calling, brethren, how that not

* *The reaſon of this aſſertion was accounted for,* Vol. II. p. 464. *Vol. IV. p.* 148.

many

many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath choſen the fooliſh things of this world," &c. 1 Cor. i. 26,—31. He hath ſaved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which he purpoſed in Chriſt before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. Hence the ſaints aſcribe their converſion and quickening to the name of God, and to the grace of God; "By grace I am what I am," ſays Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 10. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory," Pſalm cxv. 1.

4. Wherefore doth he juſtify and pardon any guilty ſinner? It is even for his name's ſake; Iſa. xliii. 25. "I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſion for my name's ſake. And Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. We are juſtified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt, whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt," &c. Again,

5. Wherefore doth he adopt any child of wrath into his family? It is for his name's ſake; Eph. i. 5. "We are predeſtinate to the adoption of children, according to the good pleaſure of his will, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace." Again,

6. Wherefore doth he ſanctify any filthy ſinner? It is even for his name's ſake, 1 Cor. i. 30. "Chriſt is made of God to us ſanctification, that no fleſh might glory in his ſight: but that he that glorieth might glory in the Lord." And hence all the great things promiſed in the covenant of grace, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Among the reſt, His putting his Spirit within them, and cauſing them to walk in his ſtatutes, are ſaid to be done for his holy name's ſake, ver. 22.

7. Wherefore will he carry on the good work, which he hath begun, and never utterly leave his people, nor ſuffer them altogether to depart from him? Why? It is even for his name's ſake, and his promiſe' ſake, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their heart, and they ſhall not depart from me. Heb. xiii. 5. I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee finally."

8. Wherefore doth he glorify at laſt? It is for his name's ſake, who is the giver both of grace and glory, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. "It is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom. The gift of God is eternal life, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord."—Thus every part of ſalvation, from firſt to laſt, is wrought for his name's ſake. "The Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect:" he begins for his name's ſake; carries on for his name's ſake; and completes the work for his name's ſake, that the head-ſtone of ſalvation may be laid on with ſhoutings of *Grace, grace unto it.*

As all the parts of ſalvation, ſo all the means of ſalvation, are granted for his name's ſake.—Is right hearing a mean of ſalvation? Well, this is what he gives, for his name's ſake, according to that promiſe, John x. 16. "Other ſheep I have that are not of this fold, them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice."—Is prayer a mean? Well, right praying is what he alone grants, for his name's ſake, according to the promiſe, Zech. xii. 10. "I will pour out the Spirit of grace and ſupplication."—Is faith a mean of ſalvation? Yea; and it is a part of ſalvation alſo, which God gives, for his name's ſake, according to his word, Eph. ii. 8. "By grace you are ſaved, thro' faith; and that not of yourſelves: it is the gift of God."—Is repentance a leading part of ſalvation? This is alſo what he gives for his name's ſake, on the back of faith, as a fruit thereof, according to his promiſe, Zech. xii. 10. "They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn;" and he hath exalted Chriſt to give it, Acts v. 31.

My friends, if there be any other things that we reckon pertains to ſalvation, which God doth not work, for his name's ſake, you may realize it as no part of ſalvation; for, I will aſſure you, his name will have the glory of every part of ſalvation.

IV. The fourth thing propoſed, was, What is imported in this Nevertheleſs, or in God's ſaving with a Notwithſtanding; and ſo to ſhow over what impediments, whether real provocations, or ſeeming impoſſibilities of bringing about this ſalvation, for his name's ſake; *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them, for his name's ſake.* It is im-

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pediments on the sinner's part that the text speaks of; therefore I confine myself to these. He saved Israel here, notwithstanding dreadful sins. Read verses 6, 7. 13, 14. 16. 19, 20, 21. 24, 25. 28, 29. 32. 34. — 39. 43. Yet *nevertheless he saved them, for his name's sake.* Did he notwithstanding all this, save them, for his name's sake? Then, what will not he do for his name? And what may not sinners expect upon this ground? What bar cannot God break, for his name's sake? What mountain cannot he come over, for his name's sake? What provocation can he not overlook, for his name's sake? Let all the sinners that hear this doctrine, beware of provoking God any more by their sins. When thus the saving mercy of God is proclaimed, in your ears; for, provoked mercy will turn to fearful vengeance: Damnation to eternity will be your doom, if this offered salvation be not received: and in order to allure you to the reception and welcoming of it, I am now telling you the freedom of it, and how God can save you with an everlasting salvation, notwithstanding of the most grievous provocations that hitherto you have been guilty of, and notwithstanding of the greatest impediments that you have laid in the way. More particularly,

1. He can save for his name's sake, notwithstanding grievous guilt and heinous transgressions. Hence his name is declared to be a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin. "Come now, and let us reason together," says God, Isa. i. 18. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; tho' they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Make not this objection against yourselves, in coming to a God in Christ for salvation; for here you see mercy courting you, notwithstanding this very objection.

2. He can save for his name's sake, notwithstanding long continuance in sin; though you have been a transgressor from the womb to this day, be it never so long that you have been following that fearful trade of sin, yet mercy is now following you with a *how long; how long.* Many a *how long* is he pursuing you with; one is, Numb. xiv. 11. "How LONG will this people provoke

me? And HOW LONG will it be ere they believe me?" Another *how long* is, Pſalm iv. 2. "How LONG will ye turn my glory into ſhame? How LONG will ye love vanity?"—Another *how long* is, Prov. i. 22. "How LONG ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity?"—Another is, Prov. vi. 9. "How LONG wilt thou ſleep, O ſluggard? When wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep?"—A ſixth *how long* is, Jer. iv. 14. "How LONG ſhall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?"

3. He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding manifold apoſtaſies and backſlidings, Jer. iv. 14. "O Jeruſalem, waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be ſaved: how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within you? Turn, O backſliding children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you," Jer. iii. 14. And ver. 1. "Tho' thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me. Let the wicked forſake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Iſa. lv. 5. I will heal your backſlidings."

4. He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding of your prodigious neglect and contempt of God hitherto. See Iſa. xliii. 22,—25. "But thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael; I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for my name's ſake, and will not remember thy ſins." O wonder of wonders! that ſuch may be ſaved, for his name's ſake.

5. He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding grievous, rebellious incorrigibleneſs and frowardneſs. See Iſa. lvii. 17, 18. "For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners."

5. He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding outward afflictions and poor circumſtances in the world, Zeph. iii. 12. And *I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord.* Iſ. xxvi. 8. 'Yea, in the way of thy judgments,

O Lord, have we waited for thee; the deſire of our ſoul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.'— Though you be an out-caſt, that no body cares for you, he may ſave you for his name's ſake; for, "He gathers the out-caſts of Iſrael," Iſa. lvi. 8.

7. He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding baſeneſs, unworthineſs, and pollution, for there is a fountain opened; Zech. xiii. 1. "In that day there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs."

8. He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding groſs darkneſs and fearful ignorance: "It is written in the prophets, They ſhall all be taught of God," Iſaiah liv. 13. John vi. 45.

9. He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding long refuſals, and reſiſting of many calls, and ſlighting many opportunities; Rom. x. 21. "All day long I have ſtretched forth my hands unto a diſobedient and gainſaying people." Importing, that after all theſe refuſals, he is yet ſtanding with open arms to receive all comers, ſaying, *Whoever will, let him come.*

10. He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding of none-ſuch, and unparallelled wickedneſs; what, if there be no ſinner like you, nevertheleſs, he can ſave for his name's ſake; becauſe there is no Saviour like him: if thy unbelieving heart ſuggeſts deſperate thoughts, as if there were no ſalvation for thee, ſaying, Who is a ſinner like unto me? Let Micah vii. 18. be an anſwer, *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?*

In a word, he can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding the greateſt and higheſt mountains either of ſin or miſery, that ſeem to be in the way; Zech. iv. 7. "Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel thou ſhalt become a plain." He can ſave for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding dreadful hardneſs of heart, and innumerable plagues of heart, atheiſm, unbelief, deadneſs, and ſecurity; the God that works for his name's ſake, can take away the heart of ſtone, and give the heart of fleſh; and out of ſtones raiſe up children to Abraham. He can ſave, for his name's ſake, notwithſtanding of nameleſs maladies, nameleſs objections, that no miniſter in the

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world can mention, far leſs remove: may be the obſtacles, in the way of your ſalvation, are out of the ſight of man, out of the ſight of miniſters; but they are in God's ſight, and the omniſcient God, that knows it, is the omnipotent God, that can remove it, and ſave for his name's ſake. Oh! but may ſome poor ſoul think, no doubt, he can ſave for his name's ſake; but my objection is, I doubt of his will. Why, man? wherefore is God now telling you what he can do; but to remove your ill thoughts of him, and to manifeſt his good-will towards you; behold, he is more willing to ſave, than you are willing to be ſaved: if it be ſalvation from ſin, as well as ſalvation from hell, that you mean, then you are either unwilling to be thus ſaved, and ſo your ruin is, that you will not come to him for ſalvation; or, if you be willing, you are more than welcome to him for all the ſalvation he can work for you. It is his will to ſave you, notwithſtanding of thouſands and millions of objections in the way.

V. The Fifth thing propoſed, in the general method, was, To offer ſome reaſons why he thus ſaves for his name's ſake. Why?

1. He ſaves for his name's ſake, becauſe if he did not ſo, he would ſave none of Adam's race: the beſt ſaints on earth cannot deſerve mercy; the ſalvation of the moſt righteous is an act of grace; therefore, the righteous run to his name; and even the juſt muſt live by faith, ſaying, "Tho' our iniquities teſtify againſt us, yet do thou it for thy name's ſake," Jer. xiv. 7. And, "Help us, for the glory of thy name," Pſalm lxxix. 9. He can ſave none, if he did not ſave them for his name's ſake.

2. He ſaves for his name's ſake, that ſinners may hope in his name; that they may return to him, and call upon him for mercy; "There is mercy and forgiveneſs with him, that he may be feared," Pſal. cxxx. 4. Why, ſay you, could not God be more feared, if he had no mercy and forgiveneſs with him? It is true; man, in that caſe, could fear as devils do, deſpairingly; but not with *any penitential* fear; "The goodneſs of God leads to repent-

repentance," Rom. ii. 4. Thus God interprets his merciful providences, as a drawing with the cords of love. None could truſt in his name, if he did not ſave for his name's ſake.

3. He ſaves for his name's ſake, that ſinners may adore his name; that they may admire his mercy. God remembers his own glory; and therefore ſaves for his name's ſake, that men may glorify his name. O wonder-working God, that can ſhew mercy, when nothing is deſerved but miſery; this effect it had upon David, Pſal. viii. 1. 9. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Pſalm xlviii. 10. According to thy name, O God, ſo is thy praiſe unto the ends of the earth."

4. He ſaves, for his name's ſake, that ſinners, who will not flee to his name as a ſtrong tower, and afterwards glorify his name, by living to his praiſe, may be left inexcuſable in their ſins. The glory of God's juſtice will be conſpicuous in thoſe that have ſlighted his mercy; "Behold, you deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh!" They that deſpiſe ſuch mercy, treaſure up to themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5.

5. He ſaves for his name's ſake, becauſe it is the only fit way for us to be ſaved in: if God ſhould offer to ſave us for our own ſakes, for our righteouſneſs' ſake, for our duties' ſake; Oh! how unfit would that be! We might think God were mocking us, becauſe we have nothing but ſin and hell about us; and our beſt righteouſneſs deſerves damnation: but when he offers ſalvation for his own name's ſake, then it appears to be a fit offer; we cannot think God is mocking us: would he thus affront himſelf, when his own name is the ground of faith laid before us?

6. He ſaves for his name's ſake, becauſe it is the only fit way for him to ſave us in: it is the only way of ſalvation ſuitable to his infinite excellency, who cannot but conſult the glory of his perfections in all his works. Now, God's glory requires that no ſalvation ſhould be found but in his name. Why hath he told us of mercy running in the channel of the new covenant? Why hath he told us that juſtice itſelf is drawn in to be upon the ſinner's ſide, in as much as he can be juſtified in for-

forgiving them? Why hath he diſplayed ſo much of wiſdom in making judgment and mercy to meet, and kiſs each other? Wiſdom in puniſhing ſin, and yet ſaving the ſinner? Why? it is even that he might be glorified; that the loftineſs of man might be brought down, and the haughtineſs of man laid low, and that the Lord alone may be exalted, Iſa. ii. 11. This way of ſaving is ſuitable to his nature.

VI. The Sixth thing propoſed, was, to draw ſome inferences from the whole. And is it ſo, That when God ſaves ſinners, or a ſinful people, he does it for his Name's ſake, notwithſtanding their provocations, whereby they forfeit his help, and deſerve deſtruction; then,

1ſt, Hence learn by way of Caution, the following particulars.

1. That this doctrine yields no encouragement to ſin, though God ſaves ſinners, for his name's ſake; the current of his providence, the current of his word, the current of his dealing, all declare his enmity at ſin. What is there in the word that can encourage us in ſin? All the threatenings of the law ſay, in effect, as you regard the wrath of God, beware of ſin: All the commands of the law ſay, as you regard the authority of God, beware of ſin: All the promiſes of the goſpel ſay, as you regard the grace, love, and mercy of God, beware of ſin: And God's ſaving for his name's ſake, ſays, as you regard the great *name* of God, beware of ſin. The great ſalvation that he exhibites for his name's ſake, is ſalvation from ſin; and therefore, to make this an encouragement to ſin is to affront his name, to abuſe his name, to profane his name, and to take his name in vain; "And he will not hold them guiltleſs that take his name in vain."

2. Think not that God will deliver any from eternal damnation, who are gone to hell, or ſave them for his name's ſake; no, by no means: they are loſt for ever, that die out of Chriſt.

2*dly*, Hence ſee, by way of Information, a foundation for the following truths.

1. *The* reaſon why the ſaints confide in God; and why believers

believers truſt in his name, and flee to his name in time of danger; they are acquaint with his name: "And they that know his name will put their truſt in him," Pſalm ix. 10. They know his grace, his goodneſs, his power, his holineſs, juſtice, and truth; and they have the encouragement of a promiſe ſo to do, Pſalm xci. 14. "I will ſet him on high, becauſe he hath known my name." And why is it that they pray for help, for his name's ſake? Becauſe they know God will do more for his name, than otherwiſe he could do, Pſalm xxv. 11. Jer. xiv. 7. Thus Joſhua, when Iſrael were ſmitten at Ai, chap. vii. 9. "And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" Again,

2. Hence ſee, to whom we ought to give the glory of experienced mercy, even to God's name; as Pſalm cxv. 1. "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's ſake." Thus you will find David frequently at this work, Pſalm cxlv. 1, 2. "I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bleſs thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bleſs thee, and I will praiſe thy name for ever and ever." This is one ground of God's helping, Iſa. xxix. 22, 23. This is, in a manner, all that JEHOVAH gets by all his glorious ſalvations wrought for us, Ezek. xxxvi. 23. Let us therefore learn to render the glory of all God's works unto his glorious name.

3. Hence ſee a door of hope opened for ſinners in this goſpel. Does God ſave for his name's ſake, theſe who may not put in for ſalvation? Whatever they be, whatever objections you can make, they are anſwered by this one argument, God ſaves for his name's ſake, when there is no other reaſon for his doing ſo in the world: he can make a reaſon to himſelf, and find the anſwer in himſelf why he will ſave.

4. Hence ſee the freeneſs of the goſpel-method of ſalvation; for God ſaves with a *non obſtante*, that is, with a notwithſtanding. O but the goſpel-ſalvation is free! The law brings in ſo many *proviſos*; that is, either the law of works, truly ſo called; it ſays, If ye do, ye ſhall live; if you be perfect, ye ſhall be happy; or the law, falſly ſo called, the many remainders of it in man's heart

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that makes the ſinner think, Why, I cannot be ſaved, unleſs I do as well as I can; unleſs I be ſo and ſo qualified, I cannot expect to be ſaved: but the goſpel opens a door of free acceſs to ſinners with a Nevertheleſs; notwithſtanding whatever ſins, guilt, diſorder, confuſion, death, diſtreſs and ruin; notwithſtanding whatſoever wickedneſs be about you, yet here is a way wherein you may expect ſalvation: *Nevertheleſs be ſaved them, for his name's ſake.*

Object. Muſt I not be ſaved upon my believing and repenting, is not faith at leaſt the condition of my ſalvation?

Anſw. Faith and repentance are parts of this ſalvation that God gives for his name's ſake; and how can they be conditions of that ſalvation, whereof they are leading parts? "By grace you are ſaved, through faith; and that not of yourſelves: it is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. Chriſt is exalted to give repentance, Acts v. 51. None are ſaved without faith and repentance; becauſe all that are ſaved of the Lord, are ſaved thereunto: they are ſaved from unbelief, and brought to faith; ſaved from impenitency, and brought to repentance. Faith and repentance are the beginnings of this ſalvation, and ſalvation cannot be completed, without having a beginning: but both beginning and end are what God gives for his name's ſake: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Chriſt," Phil. i. 6.; becauſe his name is "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending." Faith itſelf is not neceſſary to ſalvation, as a moral condition; but only a phyſical inſtrument. And hence, as it is not poſſible a beggar can be the better of a free gift offered to him, if he does not take it, or accept of it; yet his taking of it, is no moral condition, but only the natural inſtrument, or mean of poſſeſſion: ſo, neither can any poſſibly be the better of this free ſalvation, that God offers in the goſpel, if they will not take it, or have it in the manner it is offered, namely, Salvation from ſin and wrath, unto eternal holineſs and happineſs, and all freely, for God's name's ſake. Taking is no moral condition, otherwiſe it would contradict the deſign of the goſpel. *Faith* is nothing elſe but a welcoming this ſalvation

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in this manner: it is the ſoul's acquieſcing and ſailing in with this method; not a condition of it properly, but a cloſing with it freely: it is a believing that God will ſave in this way for his name's ſake: and not for the ſake of our faith, or any thing elſe done by, or wrought in us. It is a being content to be ſaved this way, that the name of God may for ever get the praiſe; and renouncing all other grounds of faith and reaſons of hope, taking this name of the Lord for his ſtrong tower, reſolving to reſt here.

5. Hence ſee, what is the laſt and ultimate refuge of faith. The firſt reſort of faith is to a word, a *may be the Lord will be gracious:* but a finding no reſt here, then perhaps it goes to a direct promiſe; ſuch as that, *A new heart will I give you;* and pleads for the promiſe' ſake: but needing to be better fixed, it goes to Chriſt, and pleads for Chriſt's ſake; in whom all the promiſes are Yea and Amen. But why ſhould God ſave for Chriſt's ſake? What obligation is God under to accept of that ranſom and atonement in the blood of Chriſt for me? Why? Then laſt of all it flees to God's name, and ſees that God's name will be more magnified in this way of ſalvation, than it can be in any other way of God's dealing with it; and hence it is never ſaid he damns for his name's ſake; for his name gets not ſo much glory that way. Here then is the laſt ſhift of faith, and its ultimate refuge and ground of hope; and there is ground enough here.

Uſe 3. The next Uſe ſhall be for Examination. Try whether or not God hath begun to ſave you for his name's ſake; or, if you have got his name engaged and concerned in your ſalvation-work. For the trial of this intereſting point, conſider the following things.

1. They whom God hath begun to ſave for his name's ſake, and to whom he will be further merciful for his name's ſake, they are made ſenſible that God hath hitherto helped them for his name's ſake; and that they are beholden to God's name for every bit of bread; indebted to his name for their preſervation out of hell; obligated to his mercy and power, that hitherto he hath helped, pitied,

pitied, and ſaved them from everlaſting ruin: and they are ſo affected with his mercy, that they endeavour to live like perſons ſenſible of this obligation they are under to his name; though, in ſtrict juſtice, they deſerve nothing, and God may ſay, as Judges x. 13. "I will deliver you no more;" and ſwear, as Jer. xliv. 26, 27. "Behold, I have ſworn by my great name, ſaith the Lord, that my name ſhall be no more named in the mouth of any man." Yet, being a gracious God, will not utterly leave them, 1 Sam. xii. 22. but ſave them, and others, for their ſake; ſo good is he to them, Gen. xviii. 32.

2. Hath frowning providence done you good? Are you purged by afflictions? For theſe whom God delivers for his name's ſake, their deliverance from trouble bears ſome reſemblance to his name who delivers.

Quest. How ſhall we know, when God's rod hath done its work, and when God hath ſaid, *It is enough?* 2 Sam. xxiv. 16.

Answ. (1.) When you are humbled for the ſin that cauſed God to take his rod in his hand; ſuch as want of love, deſpiſing the goſpel, abounding of error, diviſion, unbrotherly animoſities. Have theſe things been lamented, loathing the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and the plain adminiſtration of God's ordinances? Profeſſors grown full in their ſtomachs. Is the caſe altered? The abounding of hypocriſy under the ſpecious name of higher attainments, &c.

(2.) When a people can thrive under merciful providences without the rod; for God will not needleſly afflict any, much leſs his own people, 1 Pet. i. 6. Lam. iii. 33. More particularly,

1. Are your ſalvation and God's glory twiſted and conjoined? Will God's name be a loſer, if your bonds be ſtrengthened and continued? Joſhua ſaid, "What wilt thou do unto thy name?" This moved God to ſhew mercy on a wicked people, Deut. xxxii. 26, 27.; leſt God ſhould loſe his declarative glory in the wonders he had wrought for Iſrael; leſt the heathen ſhould ſay, God cannot ſave his people. Can you ſay, Oh! I think God will want much glory, if I be not ſaved; and I cannot think that his

his name ſhould want that glory and praiſe that I ſee it will get in ſaving me.

2. They whom he ſaves, for his name's ſake, are brought off all hope of being ſaved for their own ſake: as God ſays, "Not for your ſakes have I done this, but my own name's ſake;" ſo they are brought to ſay, not for my ſake will God do ſo and ſo, but for his name's ſake.

3. They ſeek all they want from God, for his name's ſake. Many a graceleſs beggar ſeeks an alms for God's ſake, that know not what they ſay; but believers are beggars at God's door, and they ſeek for God's ſake: they ſeek pardon for his name's ſake, with David; "For thy name's ſake, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great:" they ſeek, ſaying, Quicken me, for thy name's ſake; purify, for thy name's ſake; give grace, for thy name's ſake: and every thing they ſeek, is for his name's ſake. Thus they lean upon his lap, and give evidence of their being loved with an everlaſting love.

4. They will deſire to do much for his name's ſake; and will be content to ſuffer for his name's ſake. Such is their regard to his name, that every duty they perform will be eaſy to them, when they have his name and honour in their eye; and they count their ſufferings all to be light, when they ſuffer for his name: this made them take joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, Heb. x. 34.

5. They will ſet his name on high, as being a name above every name. Hence they will deſire, and endeavour to have his name exalted in the world, that all men may know his name: they will be grieved when his name is profaned and blaſphemed; they will be content that their name ſink and be buried, that his may ariſe, ſaying, Let me decreaſe, and him increaſe; whatever may come of my name, let thy name be exalted: their ambition will be to have his name written in their foreheads; "I will write upon them my new name," Rev. iii. 12.

6. They approve and eſteem the way of ſalvation, for this reaſon, becauſe God ſaves for his name's ſake: their hearts ſay, O! I prize ſalvation the better, that his name is honoured thereby: they ſet his name above their ſalvation, as the crown of it; and his name below

their ſalvation, as the ground of it; and his name and attributes round about their ſalvation, as the defence of it: the place of their defence being the munition of rocks. His name is a rock round about them; "As the mountains are about Jeruſalem, ſo the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever." As that is his reaſon for ſaving them, even his name, ſo it is the reaſon for expecting ſalvation: as God's argument in ſaving them, is drawn from his name; ſo their argument in truſting in him for ſalvation, is drawn from his name. O! but this is what ſweetens the thoughts of ſalvation, that his name is exalted thereby: they deſire no other way of ſalvation but through his name.

7. They not only run *to* this ſtrong tower, the name of the Lord, but they run *into* it, and reſt there: they hang their ſalvation upon this ſtrong nail; they build upon this everlaſting rock; here they have their reſt. As the ſparrow and ſwallow built their neſts on the rafters of the temple and tabernacle, and there laid their young; ſo they dwell on high: Chriſt is the temple, and God's name and attributes are, as it were, the lofty pillars and high rafters of the temple; and faith builds there, reſides there, where neither the devil, nor all the powers of hell, ſhall be able to diſturb or annoy them: there they dwell ſafely from the fear of evil; there they lay their young, and bring forth their fruit unto God, even all the fruits of holineſs and righteouſneſs, which are to the praiſe and glory of God: for, as from him their fruit is found, Hoſ. xiv. 8. from the temple; ſo their fruit is to him, being dedicated to the temple, to the praiſe and glory of his name that dwells therein.

8. They whom God has begun to ſave for his name's ſake, as their confidence is placed only in his name, as the leading argument of their truſt; ſo this argument will carry them thro' thouſands of difficulties, oppoſitions and impediments that ſeem to ly in the way of their ſalvation; this name of God will ſtrengthen you againſt thouſands of temptations, thouſands of objections. Notwithſtanding your ſins, your guilt, your rebellion, your apoſtaſy, the wrath gone out againſt you for ſin, as it *did againſt* Jonah, in fearful ſtreams of indignation; yet

faith

faith will look again to God's holy temple, to God's holy name, and ſay, *Nevertheleſs be ſaves for his name's ſake:* there are thouſands of things to damp and diſcourage me in looking for ſalvation, and if I conſider them, I muſt deſpair; but, with Abraham, I deſire to conſider nothing but God's name, and word of promiſe, Rom. iv. 19. Here is one thing that can overcome all things, O! I hope he will ſave me for his name's ſake; have you won here? ſtay here, and you are ſafe. There is not a man fuller of God, in all the world, than he that is brought to nothing before God, and has nothing to rely on but the great name of God. That name never failed a ſoul that truſted to it.

In a word, they whom God ſaves for his name's ſake, are brought, 1. To know his name. 2. To truſt in his name. 3. To love his name. 4. To fear and worſhip his name.

Uſe 4. The fourth uſe ſhall be by way of exhortation. And our exhortation ſhall be tendered, 1. To ſinners in general. 2. To believers in particular.

1ſt, To all ſinners in general, O Sirs, does God ſave for his name's ſake, and that with a *notwithſtanding* of innumerable ſins? Then let ſinners hope in his name, and fly to his name for ſalvation.

Quest. How is this doctrine the ground of faith to *all*, ſeeing thoſe whom God deſigns to ſave are only the elect, and theſe whom he actually ſaves are only believers? How then is this doctrine to be conceived as an encouragement to all ſinners, to look to his name for ſalvation?

Answ. Salvation is to be conſidered three ways; either ſalvation decreed, ſalvation obtained, or ſalvation exhibited in the word.—Salvation decreed, concerns the elect indeed; and the election ſhall obtain: but thus it is not the firſt object of any man's faith. Who are elect, is a ſecret, and ſecret things belong to God. You are not concerned with ſalvation as it lies in the decree.—Salvation obtained, is what concerns believers; and this is not the object of any man's faith either, but rather the object of the ſenſe of them who have it, when they

know they have it. But ſalvation exhibited in the word, is what every man that hears the goſpel is concerned with; ſalvation promiſed, ſalvation offered in the general diſpenſation of the goſpel, with a particular invitation to every one to look to Chriſt for ſalvation. Now, to lay hold of ſalvation here, as it lies in the word, is the ſafe way for you to take; if you lay hold on ſalvation exhibited to you in the word, then you will come to find it ſalvation obtained; and when you find it ſalvation obtained, then you may find it ſalvation decreed: and this is the right order in which you aſcend to God's decree, by taking hold of his word, when to you the word of this ſalvation is ſent. See Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. "Say not, even in thine heart, Who ſhall aſcend to heaven," to ſee if ſalvation was decreed for me? or, "Who ſhall deſcend into the deep," to the heart, to ſee if ſalvation be obtained? you will find no object of faith in yourſelf: but the word is nigh, the word of ſalvation which we preach; it is in thy mouth, and in thy heart, to be acknowledged with the mouth, and embraced with the heart, ver. 9. O then, ſinner, his word, which you are called to take hold of, is his name; it is that whereby he makes himſelf known: fly to his name, and look for ſalvation, as it is in his word, in his name. And in coming to him for ſalvation, 1. Let his name be your motive; for thus you will glorify his name. 2. Let his name be your tower, to which you fly for ſalvation. 3. Let his name be the meaſure of your hope: how much he will be glorified in ſaving you, ſo much let your hope and expectation go forth that he will do ſo. 4. Let his name be your plea and argument: "What wilt thou do for thy great name?" Joſh. vii. 9. O ſave for thy name's ſake. "Father glorify thy name." Caſt anchor here, and you ſhall ride out all ſtorms, and be eternally ſafe.

2*dly*, We next tender our exhortation to believers, in particular, who have run to this ſtrong tower of ſalvation, the name of the Lord. O admire his goodneſs, admire his name: he knows all your ſins againſt him, and againſt his name; yet for his name's ſake, he ſhews mercy. O! let ſin againſt ſo good a God be abhorred: let *his goodneſs* lead you to repentance more and more: *The*

earth

earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord. O believer, are you called by his name: praiſe him for his mercy, truth, faithfulneſs; "According to thy name, O God, ſo is thy praiſe unto the ends of the earth; thy right-hand is full of righteouſneſs," Pſal. xviii. 10. O Sirs, aſcribe all the mercy you met with to his name; and ſtudy to be meet objects for God's name, to be more and more glorified, upon his engaging his name for your help. Study to become ſuch perſons as the ſcripture require: for though ſinners have ground of hope, that he MAY do, for his name's ſake; yet ſaints have ground of hope that he WILL do for his name's ſake: the graceleſs may run to him with hope, that he may begin the good work, for his name's ſake; but the gracious may run to him with hope, that he will perfect the good work for his name's ſake. His name is engaged.

In a word, O improve his name in every caſe; for he hath a name ſuiting every want, every need. Do you need wonders to be wrought for you? His name is Wonderful: look to him ſo to do, for his name's ſake.—Do you need counſel and direction? His name is the Counſellor: caſt yourſelf on him and his name for this.—Have you mighty enemies to debate with? His name is the mighty God; ſeek he may exert his power for his name's ſake.—Do you need his fatherly pity? His name is the everlaſting Father: "As a Father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Plead his pity, for his name's ſake.—Do you need peace external, internal, or eternal? His name is the Prince of peace; ſeek for his name's ſake, that he may create peace.—Do you need healing? O Sirs, his name is JEHOVAH-ROPHI, the Lord the healer and phyſician: ſeek, for his name's ſake, that he may heal all your diſeaſes.—Do you need pardon? His name is JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, the Lord our righteouſneſs: ſeek, for his name's ſake, that he may be merciful to your unrighteouſneſs.—Do you need defence and protection? His name is JEHOVAH-NISSI, the Lord your banner: ſeek for his name's ſake, that his banner of love and grace may be ſpread over you.—Do you need proviſion in extreme want? His name is JEHOVAH-JIREH, in the mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen, the

Lord will provide.—Do you need his preſence? His name is JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, the Lord is there; IMMANUEL, God with us: look to him to be with you, for his name's ſake.—Do you need audience of prayer! His name is the Hearer of prayer.—Do you need ſtrength? His name is the Strength of Iſrael.—Do you need comfort? His name is the Conſolation of Iſrael.—Do you need ſhelter? His name is the city of refuge.—Have you nothing and need all? His name is All in all.—— Sit down and deviſe names to your wants and needs, and you will find he hath a name ſuitable thereunto: for your ſupply, he hath wiſdom to guide you; and power to keep you; mercy to pity you; truth to ſhield you; holineſs to ſanctify you: righteouſneſs to juſtify you; grace to adorn you; and glory to crown you. Truſt in his name, who ſaves, for his name's ſake.

SERMON

SERMON LXXX.

HEAVEN'S GRAND REPOSITORY; or, the FATHER'S Love to the SON, and depoſiting *all things* into his Hand, a ſtrong encouragement to Faith.*

JOHN iii. 35.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

MY friends, the natural ſtate we are all into, is a ſtate of poverty and want. The firſt Adam ſpent our ſtock, and left us nothing but ſin, and miſery, and death. If we have any right view and knowledge of ourſelves, we will know that we are now curſed in want of *all things;* that we are nothing but ſin, and have nothing but ſin, and can do nothing but ſin, and deſerve nothing but hell. As creatures, we are originally nothing; as worthleſs creatures, we are leſs than nothing; and as wicked creatures, we are worſe than nothing. If any here are made truly ſenſible of their total want of all that is good, and would know where they may be ſupplied, my text makes a diſcovery of a good hand, wherein there is a greater ſtock of proviſion and furniture than ever Adam had before his fall. Here is a ſecond Adam, the eternal Son of God, ſo well qualified for ſupplying our wants, that there was never a hand heard

* This ſubject was handled in two ſermons. The firſt was delivered at a ſacramental ſolemnity at Kinglaſſy, June 13th, 1731.---- The ſecond was an Action-ſermon, preached at Dunfermline, June 27th, 1731.

tell of in heaven or earth, that could have more than he hath; "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."

It is no matter though you have nothing in your hand, if you come to him who hath all things in his. As the apoſtle Paul gloried in his infirmities, that the power of Chriſt might reſt upon him: ſo, it were good if we were glorying in our emptineſs, that the fulneſs of Chriſt might be magnified in us. As he hath a full hand, ſo it is an open hand; for, this immenſe fulneſs is made the ground of faith, as you ſee in the context; becauſe it is laid down as a foundation of what follows: "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life." What this believing is, we may ſee, ver. 33.: it is receiving his teſtimony, and ſetting to the ſeal that God is true. God is true, whether we ſet to our ſeal or not; but, by faith, we ſubſcribe to his truth; and hereby God reckons himſelf honoured and glorified: for, he that receiveth the teſtimony of Chriſt, ſubſcribes to the truth of God; and, by believing in Chriſt, we ſet to our ſeal that God is true to all the promiſes made concerning Chriſt; and ſo give credit to all that he hath ſaid by the prophets; and that he is true to all the promiſes made in Chriſt, venturing our ſouls upon the veracity of God: and the more credit we give him, the more honour we put upon him.

QUEST. But how does it appear, that when we receive the teſtimony of Chriſt, we receive the teſtimony of God, and ſet to our ſeal that God is true?

ANSW. Why, becauſe as Chriſt is the Word of God, ſo he is the Sent of God, to deliver the word of God; *He whom God hath ſent, ſpeaketh the words of God:* and he was ſent of God for this very end; "A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you, from amongſt your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall you hear in all things, whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you." But for clearing this further, we ſhall propoſe, and anſwer another queſtion.

QUEST. How does it appear, that Chriſt, as the Sent of God, ſpeaketh the words of God? and conſequently, how may we be ſure of this, that when we believe the *truth of Chriſt*, we believe the truth of God.

ANSW.

Answ. It appears that he ſpeaks nothing but the words of God, becauſe he hath the Spirit of God, and the Spirit above meaſure; for, "God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him." The prophets of old had the Spirit in a limited manner, only with reſpect to ſome particular revelations, and ſometimes ſpoke of themſelves; but Chriſt had the Spirit always reſiding in him, without ſtated meaſure or limitation; and therefore ſpoke always the words of God. The more of the Spirit of God that any perſon hath, the more will he ſpeak the words of God: now, the Spirit was never in any mere creature, but as in a veſſel; but the Spirit was, and is in Chriſt, as a fountain, and as in a bottomleſs ocean: therefore his words may well be depended upon, and reſted in, as the words of God. Here is a foundation for faith, in reſpect of his veracity. But, is there as much foundation for faith, in reſpect of his ability and furniture every way? Yea, there is; for, "He loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."

In which words we may notice theſe two things following:

1. An Aſſertion; "The Father loveth the Son: He was always his delight," Prov. viii. 30. And he is his delight ſtill.

2. A Proof and Evidence of this aſſertion; "He hath given all things into his hand." He gives him ſo much truſt, that he could not entruſt him with more; for, what more can be conceived than *all things?* Love is beſt known and evidenced by the greatneſs of the lover, and the loving gifts he beſtows upon the object beloved. Here is the greateſt gift, evidencing the greateſt love; *The Father hath loved the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* This is the honour of Chriſt, and the happineſs of his people, that the Father hath given all things into the hands of Chriſt the Mediator. If you would have a ſum of theſe *all things*, it may be gathered from what follows, *viz.* that it is *everlaſting life*, and all that attends it, and all the means that lead to it; all the parts of it, and all things that belong to it; for it follows, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life."

The text then lays down a ſtrong ground of encouragement

ragement to believe on the Son of God unto eternal life: therefore we may lay down the following doctrinal propoſition as the ſum of it, namely,

OBSERV. "That the Father's love to the Son, evi-
"denced by his giving all things into his hand,
"is a ſtrong argument and encouragement for faith
"to believe in him."

You will ſee this ſame argument adduced and made uſe of by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, Mat. xi. 27,28. "All things are delivered to me of my Father." And amongſt other things, all the Father's counſels and ſecrets, he being the great Secretary of heaven: and, what follows? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt." Come to me, as the Father's truſtee, who hath intruſted me with all things.

We ſhall endeavour, through divine aſſiſtance, to proſecute this ſubject in the following method.

I. I would ſpeak a little of the Father's love to the Son.

II. Speak of this evidence of the Father's love: and that, 1. Shew ſome of theſe things the Father gives to the Son. 2. Notice the import of the expreſſion, *He gave all things into his hand.* 3. How this evidences the Father's love to him. 4. Why he hath thus manifeſted his love to him.

III. How this love of the Fether, thus evidenced, in giving all things into his hand, is a ground of faith.

IV. Make ſome Application of the whole.

I. I am to ſpeak a little of the Father's love to the Son. For clearing of this, there are theſe following Poſitions I would offer.

Firſt Poſition is, "That there are many ſcriptural "expreſſions of the Father's love to the Son." He is called *the Beloved*, emphatically, Eph. i. 6. He is called his *dear Son*, or the *Son of his love*, Col. i. 13. He ſolemnly declares his love to him from heaven three ſeveral times; once, at his baptiſm; again, at his *transfiguration*; and afterwards in his agony, by that

audi-

audible voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed." He expreſſes himſelf with the greateſt complacency in him; and that in ſuch terms, as might invite all the world to fall in love with him: "Behold my ſervant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth," Iſa. lxii. 1.

Second Poſition. "That the Father's love to the Son, "imports ſomething in it that is very great and glorious." It imports, that there is an infinite and inconceivable ſweetneſs in the perſon of Chriſt, and in his undertaking, that renders him the object of his Father's deareſt love and complacency. There is ſuch a lovelineſs in him, as makes him not only the darling of ſaints, but the darling of his Father. It imports, that the Father's heart is fixed upon him; that his very ſoul is, as it were, knit unto him. Would you know where to find God's heart, ſo as to get a ſhare of his heart's love? Then, get into Chriſt; for, his heart is fixed upon him, and rejoices in him: and, indeed, they that rejoice in Chriſt, they partake of his Father's joy and delight.

Third Poſition. "That there are ſeveral capacities "in which the Father loveth the Son." He loves him as his Son, and he loves him as his Servant; he loves him as God, the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity, and he loves him as Mediator, God-man.—He loves him, I ſay, as God the Son; therefore called, "The only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father," John i. 18. This is expreſſed in terms adapted to our capacity: but it is a myſtery too deep for us to fathom; for, how one divine perſon loves another divine perſon, none but a divine perſon can underſtand. How the Father loves the Son, none but the Father and the Son can comprehend. As he is begotten of the Father, by an eternal and an ineffable generation; ſo he is loved of the Father by an internal and an ineffable love. The Father cannot but love him as he loves himſelf; for, as in reſpect of his nature and eſſence, he is one God with the Father and eternal Spirit; ſo, in reſpect of his perſonality, he is his Father's exact picture, being the image of the inviſible God, and the expreſs image of his perſon.—Again, He loves him as Mediator, God-man:

in

in which office he is the Father's Servant on our buſineſs, *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold,* Iſa. lxii. 1. This is what moſt concerns us; for what would it avail us to hear only that the Father loveth the Son, if we had no ſhare of that love? But, behold, here is the good news of the goſpel, that the Father loveth the Son, as he is clothed with the office of a Mediator and Saviour, to ſave the like of you and me. He loves him as his Servant, whom he hath choſen to his office: he loves him as his Anointed, whom he hath qualified for this work; "I have put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles;" that is, to bring forth light and ſalvation to the Gentiles: for he loves and delights in him as one whom he hath given for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the priſoners from the priſon.

Fourth Poſition. "That there are ſeveral things for "which the Father loves the Son, as our Mediator." He loves him for his undertaking of this office from all eternity; and hence he is ſaid to be his Father's delight, while his delight was with the ſons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, Prov. viii. 30, 31. The Father was ſo much in love with him, for this undertaking, that he promiſed to ſupport him therein; *Behold, my Servant, whom I uphold!* And he ſolemnly engages, that the pleaſure of the Lord ſhould proſper in his hand, Iſa. liii. 10. As he loves him for his undertaking, ſo he loves him for his performance of the work, by his coming, and doing, and dying, that he might finiſh the work the Father gave him to do. The hardeſt part of the work ſeemed to be that of his dying, and giving himſelf a ſacrifice; and ſee how the Father loves him for this, John x. 17. "Therefore doth the Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I may take it up again." Eph. v. 2. "He gave himſelf a ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour unto God." The Father was delighted with his doing and dying, his active and paſſive obedience; becauſe, by this means, he wrought out an everlaſting righteouſneſs for our juſtification, to the honour of the law and juſtice of God; "The Lord is well-pleaſed for *his* righteouſneſs' ſake; he will magnify the law, and

make

make it honourable," Iſa. xlii. 21. The Father loves him for every thing he did as our Redeemer; for, "He did always thoſe things that pleaſed him," John viii. 29. He loves him for his compaſſion and tender ſympathy he bears with ſinners; therefore it was ſaid of him, "A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and the ſmoaking flax ſhall he not quench, until he hath ſent forth judgment unto victory," Iſa. xlii. 3.—He loves him for his courageous encountering with his ſufferings in our room, ver. 4. "He ſhall not fail nor be diſcouraged, till he hath ſet judgment in the earth; and the iſles ſhall wait for his law."—Yea, the Father is delighted with him, for what he is doing, namely, his praying, and interceding in heaven: he never rejects any of his prayers, but hears him always, John xi. 42. Again,

Fifth Poſition. "That there are ſeveral properties of "the Father's love to the Son." It is an eternal love; it is an unchangeable love; the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.—It is a tender and affectionate love; therefore called his beloved Son, his dear Son.—It is a wiſe love, though he loved him dearly, yet he would not let ſin paſs unpuniſhed, when but imputed to him; "The Lord hath chaſtiſed me ſore," ſays Chriſt, Pſalm cxviii. 18. "The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him."—It is a boundleſs love and unlimited; it is a love that paſſeth knowledge: and, indeed, God's love to his people, in Chriſt, hath theſe properties; and if it be ineffable and boundleſs, what thought can we have of the vaſtneſs of his love to Chriſt?—In a word, it is a bountiful love, as appears by the effects of it; which leads me to the

Sixth Poſition. "That there are ſeveral effects of "the Father's love to the Son, ſeveral evidences and "diſcoveries of it;" ſuch as, his chooſing him, from eternity, to this honourable work; upholding him therein; revealing all his mind and boſom to him; accepting of him; and being well-pleaſed with all that he did; exalting and glorifying him at his right-hand; commanding all men to pay honour to him.—But the particular effect and evidence of his love here mentioned, is the great truſt he commits to him; he hath given all things into his hand. This leads me,

II. To

II. To the ſecond thing propoſed, namely, To ſpeak of this evidence and effect of the Father's love to the Son, he hath given all things into his hand. Here conſider, 1. What are theſe things the Father gives into Chriſt's hand. 2. What is the import of the expreſſion, his giving all things into his hand. 3. How this evidenceth the Father's love to him. 4. Why he hath thus manifeſted his love to him.

1ſt, What are theſe things the Father hath given into Chriſt's hand? *All things*, ſays the text; and ſurely it is but ſome of all things we can mention.

1. All government is given into his hand; "To us a child is born, to us a ſon is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders;—of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with judgment and with juſtice, from henceforth even for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hoſts will perform this," Iſa. ix. 6, 7. And it is a wonderful government; for his name is called, Wonderful. A wiſe government; for, he is the Counſellor: A powerful, divine government; for he is the mighty God: An everlaſting and a friendly, fatherly government; he is the everlaſting Father: A princely and peaceable government; for he is the Prince of peace: And it is a growing government; for, "Of the increaſe of his government and peace, there ſhall be no end:" It is an univerſal government; and therefore it is ſaid, "All power in heaven and earth is given unto him," Mat. xxviii. 18. He is Lord of all, and Head over all things to the church, Eph. i. 22. Angels are his ſervants, devils are his captives, and all fleſh is in his hand; "Thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he may give eternal life unto as many as thou haſt given him," John xviii. 2. Both the golden ſceptre and the iron rod are given into his hand: the government of the world, and the government of the church. He is the great Lord diſpoſer of all events, and the great Lord diſpenſer of all bleſſings, and the great Judge of quick and dead; *The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son*, John v. 22.

2. *As all* government is given into his hand, ſo all grace

grace is given into his hand; eternal life, and all its preliminaries. The ſecond Adam has got all the ſtock put into his hand, therefore he is ſaid to be the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: and out of his fulneſs we are to receive, and grace for grace, John i. 14. 16. All grace is in his hand, ſo as there is no grace to be had any where elſe: juſtifying grace, ſanctifying grace, ſaving grace, all the graces of the Spirit; yea, the Spirit and all his graces, all his gifts; his miſſion and motions, are in the hand of Chriſt. The context ſays, he has the Spirit above meaſure: and the diſpenſing of the Spirit in what meaſure he pleaſes to us is in his hand, John xvi. 7. and xv. 26. He hath the ſending of the Spirit in his hand, inſomuch that, when the Father ſends the Spirit, he ſends him in Chriſt's name; "The Comforter, which is the holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance," John xiv. 26.

3. All the bleſſings of the covenant are given into his hand; therefore we are bleſſed in him, with all ſpiritual bleſſings, in heavenly places. Hence, ſays the apoſtle, 'Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath thus bleſſed us,' Eph. i. 3. Therefore it is ſaid, "Men ſhall bleſſed in him, and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed; and in him ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed." You have a ſum of theſe ſpiritual bleſſings that are in Chriſt, 1 Cor. i. 10. "Of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption." No fleſh muſt glory in his ſight; but, that all fleſh might glory in the Lord, and have no-where elſe to go for any bleſſing, but to that bleſſed hand, into which the Father hath given all things.

4. All the promiſes of the covenant are given into his hand; he is, therefore, the centre of all the promiſes; "All the promiſes of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God," 1 Cor. i. 20. As the promiſe is affirmed by his word, and confirmed by his blood; ſo, the donation of the promiſes, and application of the promiſes, is in his hand. All the promiſes are primarily made to him, and ſecondarily, to us in him. As the immediate object of faith is the word of promiſe; ſo,

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when faith intermeddles with the promiſe, it cannot but ſee Chriſt in it, and it in Chriſt: faith takes Chriſt in the promiſe, and the promiſe in Chriſt.

5. All the fulneſs of God is given into his hand, as Mediator; "It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell," Col. i. 19. And chap. ii. 9. "In him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." All the fulneſs of divine perfection is in him; for, he is the wiſdom of God, and the power of God; and all the other attributes of God, and all the glory of God, and the glory of all theſe perfections of God, is in him, to be ſeen; "For God, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt," 2 Cor. iv. 6.

6. All the work that the Father had to do, was and is given into his hand.—The work of creation was given into his hand of the Father; for, "By him he made the worlds," Heb. i. 2.—The work of providence is given into his hand; "He upholds all things by the word of his power," ver. 3.—The work of redemption, and all the parts of it, from the beginning to the end; redemption by the price of his blood; redemption by the power of his Spirit; redemption from the law, from ſin, Satan, death, and hell; and redemption to eternal life is all in his hand. Iſa. lxi. 1. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," &c. The Father hath anointed, and qualified, and furniſhed him for the work; and clothed him with all offices, ſuch as, Prophet, Prieſt, King, Surety, Saviour, Mediator, and Redeemer, for accompliſhing the work: and thus he is entruſted with all his Father's buſineſs. This he knew after he entered the ſtage of this world in our nature; at twelve years of age, he ſaid to his parents that were ſeeking him ſorrowing; "Wherefore was it that ye ſought me? wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?" Luke ii. 49. And all the time he was on earth, he never *reſted till he* finiſhed the work which the Father gave him

him to do. And the work that is yet upon his hand, relating to the application of redemption, he is reſtleſs till it be finiſhed.—In a word, all things that the Father hath are given into his hand, John xvi. 15. "All things that the Father hath are mine:" inſomuch that he is the Author and Creator of all things, John. i. 1. "All things were made by him." And the upholder of all things, as he is the proprietor of all things, by the Father's donation, Mat. xi. 27. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." And he is the centre of all things, Eph. i. 10. "That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together in one, all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." He is the Head of all things, Eph. i. 22. Col. ii. 10. He is the Heir of all things, Heb. i. 2. But now I come to ſhew,

2*dly*, What is the import of the expreſſion, *He hath given all things into his hand.* I think the words import,

1. The freeneſs of this diſpenſation. O! in what a free manner, and with what a free heart hath the Father given all things into Chriſt's hand! All God's gifts are free; but never did he give any thing more freely than he gave all things into Chriſt's hand. Love is always free in its donations to the object beloved; and the Father's love to the Son being infinitely great, O! how freely hath the Father given all things to the Son? It is true, that all things that concern the happineſs of his people, and all the bleſſings of the covenant were dearly purchaſed by the Lord Jeſus; and ſo it cannot be ſaid of what God hath given to Chriſt, as Mediator, as it muſt be ſaid of what he gives us, that it is without our merit, and without motive on our part; for, in Chriſt, there is infinite value in his blood, to merit; and infinite dignity and lovelineſs in his perſon, to move the Father to give all things to him; and therefore, when I ſay it was a free gift, do not underſtand it as free in oppoſition to merit or motive, for they were both in Chriſt to an infinite degree; but it is free in oppoſition to force or conſtraint. The Father had no reluctancy in his infinite mind, no grudge in his heart in giving all things into Chriſt's hand; nay, it was with infinite

frankneſs and freedom; for it was in infinite love and kindneſs.

2. The words import the fulneſs of this diſpenſation; the Father hath given him all things; he hath kept nothing back from him. He hath given him all his mind, all his heart, all his counſel, all his ſecrets, all his treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, all his glory, all his authority; all things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth; all perſons, and caſes, and cauſes; nothing is with-held *.

3. The words import the fitneſs of Chriſt to bear the weight of all things. What hand could be fit to put all things into? Well did the Father know who is the fit hand; and, behold! infinite wiſdom ſees none ſo fit as Chriſt, that ſo all things might meet in the centre, even in the middle perſon of the glorious Trinity, and that all things might hang in the midſt between heaven and earth, between God and man; therefore, infinite wiſdom makes all things concentre in a God-man, that thus poor ſinful men might get hold of all things they ſtand in need of in Chriſt; even of God himſelf; for, "God is in Chriſt."

4. The words import the firmneſs of his title to all things, inſomuch, that not only hath he a natural right, as God; but a donative right, as Mediator, God-man, to all things; which are ſo put into his hand, that they are under his authority: all things that belong to his church, being in his hand, are at his keeping; all things that can befal his church, being in his hand, are at his diſpoſal; all things ſinners need, being in his hand, are at his giving: and, indeed, all things are given into his hand, that he, having a full hand, ſinners may come and ſhare of his fulneſs. But,

3*dly*, How doth this evidence the Father's love; or, what love appears in this? Why,

1. The Father's giving all things into Chriſt's hand, ſhews his love to him to be a confiding love; a love attended with confidence in him, that he can truſt him

* Several of theſe particulars may be ſeen copiouſly opened up elſewhere, on a ſubject ſomewhat parallel, Vol. IV. p. 434,—448.

with

with all things that concern his greateſt glory, and his people's good; that he is the Father's Conſident and great Truſtee, whom he can truſt with all his treaſures of grace and glory, with all his treaſures of power and majeſty. He loves him ſo, that he can entruſt him with all things. He is entruſted with all the keys of his Father's houſe; "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there you may be alſo," John xiv. 2. and with the keys of hell and death, Rev. i. 18.

2. The Father's giving all things into Chriſt's hand, ſhews his love to him to be a complacential love. A lover is known by his gifts; we give gifts to them we love; the more we love them, the more we give them. Here then is the greateſt gift, arguing the higheſt love, the deareſt love, the moſt complacential love. He gives him not only to the half, but to the whole of his kingdom: the whole of his dominion and empire: he gives him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermoſt ends of the earth for his poſſeſſion, Pſal. ii. 8. Hence,

3. It ſhews that his love to him is a generous love: what greater generoſity can be manifeſted, than by giving him all things? Could he give him more? No; it is as much as God could give; and, indeed, God only could give ſuch a gift; and it is only God that could receive ſuch a gift. It is only the proprietor of all things that could give them; and it is only the proprietor of all things that could take them in his hand, and under his management.

4. It ſhews that his love to him is a ſuperlative love, and that he loves him above all things, therefore gives all things into his hand. If there were any thing that the Father loved better than Chriſt, he would have kept that out of his hand; but having given him all things, it ſays, there is nothing he can lay in balance with him. O! how ſhould we love him above all things as the Father doth? We do not love him at all, if we do not love him above all.

5. It ſhews, that his love to him is an ingenuous love; there is no flattery here, nor diſingenuity; but the moſt wonderful affection, proved by the moſt conſpicuous action; and the love of his heart evidenced by the love

of his hand, which he hath opened ſo wide to him as to give him all. The Father and the Son not only join hands, as it were, as many will do, where there is little ingenuity of love, and integrity of affection; but the Father opened his hand and put all things into the hand of his Son.

6. It ſhews, that his love to him is a conſtant love, and that he will never repent that he ſet his love upon him; for, "The gifts and callings of God are without repentance:" and therefore, as he will never recal his love to Chriſt; ſo, he will never take out of Chriſt's hand any thing that he hath given him. Not one ſoul of all the elect of whom Chriſt ſays, "Thine they were, thou gaveſt them me," John xvii. 6.; not one ſoul of them, no, not the pooreſt youth or girl in the world will he ever take out of his hand again. Nay, the Father's hand and his meet together, as it were, and hold them faſt, that they may never periſh, never be loſt, John x. 28,—30. The Father hath given him all power in his hand to ſave and quicken whom he will, John v. 21.: and he will never revoke the power and authority that is given him.—Thus you ſee how the Father's giving him all things, evidences his love; and what love it evidences. In a word, it evidences infinite love, eternal love, unchangeable love.

4*thly*, I am to ſhew, why he thus manifeſts his love to him, by giving all things into his hands. And,

1. The Father manifeſts his love to the Son, by giving him all things, becauſe the Son lays out all things that he gets, for his Father's honour and glory. For example, the words which the Father gave him, he gives out to his people; "I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me. I have given unto them thy word," John xvii. 8. 14.—Again, the Spirit which the Father gives to him, he gives to them; *The water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water, ſpringing up unto everlaſting life*, John iv. 14.—And both his word of grace, and Spirit of grace, poured into the Mediator's lips, are what he gives out, in a conformity to the promiſe; "This is my covenant with them, ſaith the *Lord, my* Spirit that is upon thee, and my words, which

I have

I have put into thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed; nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever," Iſa. lix. 21.—Thus he that hath received gifts for men, and to whom the Father hath given all things for men, even for the rebellious, he gives out what he hath received, to the Father's honour and glory. Hence, ſays Chriſt, John xvii. 4. "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do." And what work? See a notable part of the work, ver. 22. "The glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them." And what is that glory? See a notable part of that mentioned, ver. 23. even the glory of his grace and love, drawing them to oneneſs with the Father and the Son; "I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me." It lies in manifeſting his love, his Father's love to them, in the reſemblance that it bears of his Father's love to him. God, therefore, manifeſted his love to Chriſt, in giving all things into his hand, becauſe he lays out all things the Father gives him to the Father's glory: hence he is exalted as LORD, "To the glory of God the Father," Phil. ii. 9. As Lord of lords, and Lord of all things, to the glory of God the Father, that he may bring in the revenue of praiſe and glory, and of all things to the Father. And thus, by him a revenue of honour comes in to the crown of heaven, and glory to God in the higheſt.

2. The Father has manifeſted his love to his Son, by giving him all things, becauſe, as he is one with the Father in nature and in will, and is the Father's expreſs image; his eſſential image, as God; and his repreſentative image, as Mediator; ſo he had the greateſt regard imaginable to his Father's will and command in all things; "I delight to do thy will, O my God," Pſ. xl. 8. 18. "I lay down my life; and this commandment have I received of my Father," John x. 17, 18. May I not allude to that word, Luke xi. 13. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children," eſpecially if they be obedient children? O! how infinitely more muſt God *the Father manifeſt* his love towards his eternal Son, in

giving good gifts to him, whoſe meat and drink was to do his Father's will! See Phil. ii. 7,—10.

3. The Father manifeſts his love to his Son, by giving him all things, not only as a reward of his work and victories, that are over his head, but alſo as furniture for the work and victories that are yet upon his hand to accompliſh; for, "His reward is with him, and his work is before him," Iſ. lxii. 11. Chriſt came to deſtroy God's greateſt enemies, as well as to do God's greateſt work; "For this purpoſe was the Son of God manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil. He deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." And the devil hath groaned ever ſince he met with him. He hath groaned with a ſore head, a pained head; for, *He bruiſed the head of the ſerpent.* Chriſt was the ſtouteſt combatant or ableſt hand, that ever hell or the devil met with; he would make no parley or ceſſation with his enemies, nor give over the battle till he brought the keys of hell, death and the grave alongſt with him. See how magnificently his victories are deſcribed, Iſa. lxiii. 1,—4. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozra? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength? I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel? and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat? I have trodden the wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment: for the day of vengeance is in mine heart and the year of my redeemed is come." And becauſe all things are put under his feet, in point of victory and ſubjection; all things are put in his hand in point of reward: and not only as a reward for what is over, but as furniture for his further work and victories, as long as there is any ſoul on earth, to be ranſomed from the power of ſin and Satan. See Pſal. lxxxix. 20,—25. "I have found David, my ſervant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. With whom my hand ſhall be eſtabliſhed; *mine arm* alſo ſhall ſtrengthen him. The enemy ſhall not *exact upon* him, nor the ſon of wickedneſs afflict him.

And

And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him: but my faithfulneſs and my mercy ſhall be with him; and in my name ſhall his horn be exalted. I will ſet his hand alſo in the ſea, and his right-hand in the rivers." Why does the Father furniſh him as you ſee, Iſa. xlii. 1. 4. "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles:—He ſhall not fail, nor be diſcouraged, till he ſet judgment in the earth: and the iſles ſhall wait for his law." It is, that he may bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: therefore, he is made Head over all things unto the church.

4. The Father manifeſts his love to the Son, by giving him all things, that he might be the reſtorer of all things to God, and the giver of all things unto man; "Then I reſtored that which I took not away," ſays Chriſt, Pſal. lxix. 4. The firſt Adam's ſin had robbed God and man: God's attributes was robbed of their honour, God's law was robbed of its obedience; man was robbed of the favour of God, of the image of God, of the grace of God, of the bleſſing of God. Now, all things are given into Chriſt's hand, that he might reſtore all things to God and man, that ſin had robbed them of: and accordingly he, as Mediator, reſtores what he took not away; he reſtores glory to the perfections of God, and obedience to the law of God; and by this means alſo, he reſtores to man the favour of God in juſtification, and the image of God in ſanctification.

In a word, he is the great magazine and ſtorehouſe, the poſſeſſor of all things, and the reſtorer of all things, and the outgiver of all things, that ſinners ſtand in need of, that thus a good ſolid foundation for faith may be laid unto ſinners. This leads,

III. To the third general head propoſed, namely, How this love of the Father to the Son, thus evidenced, by giving all things into his hand, is a ground of faith to ſinners.

It is laid down here for the encouragement of the faith of all ſinners that hear of it; for it follows, "He

that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life." Everlaſting life is in his hand, where all things are; and therefore, let ſinners come to him, and believe in him, for all things that they need. It is the greateſt encouragement to faith in the world, that all the riches of the new covenant are depoſited in his hand; and that in ſeveral reſpects.

1. It is the ſtrongeſt encouragement to faith, that all is in ſuch a good hand; for,

(1.) Here is ground of faith and hope to ſinners, that all things are given into ſuch a kind hand. Herein the love and kindneſs of God towards man appeard, Tit. iii. 4.; that all things ſinners need are given into the hand of a loving friend of theirs, an elder brother, a near kinſman; one that is bone of our bone and fleſh of our fleſh; who, out of kindneſs towards us, took on our nature; out of kindneſs, died in our nature, and in our room; in loving-kindneſs, came from heaven, and returned again thither; and now, in loving-kindneſs, ſends the goſpel unto us, and has promiſed to ſend the Spirit with it. Is not here ſtrong ground for faith and hope?

(2.) Here is encouragement for faith and hope, that all things are given into ſuch a high and great hand; who as he hath infinite kindneſs, ſo he hath infinite greatneſs; and therefore will act both in a ſuitableneſs to the kindneſs of his heart, and to the greatneſs of his mind. As a liberal man deviſes liberal things, and a great man loves to do great things, how much more will the great God do infinitely greater things, and that even towards great ſinners? And therefore, they may be encouraged to come to him, and look for great things from him.

(3.) Here is ground of encouragement to the faith and hope of ſinners, that all things are given into ſuch a wiſe hand; even his, who is the wiſdom of God, and knows how to give out of his treaſures, and when, and in what meaſure; "His underſtanding is infinite. He is a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him," Iſa. xxx. 18. for, "He waits to be gracious." He waits the beſt time, and therefore we would do beſt to wait his *time, and* we ſhall find it to be the beſt. *He that be-*

lieveth

lieveth maketh not haſte, knowing that wiſdom dwelleth with God.

(4.) Here is ground of faith and hope to ſinners, that all things are given into ſuch an able hand; who is the *power of God*, as well as the *wiſdom of God:* able to keep things that the Father commits to him, and able to keep all things that believers commit to him; able to ſave to the uttermoſt, able to help at the laſt extremity, able to give out all things needful for our various circumſtances, and able to do far above all that we can aſk or think.

(5.) Here is ground of faith, that the Father hath given all things into ſuch a ſure hand; inſomuch, that all the bleſſings and mercy, that he hath in his hand to give, are called, *The ſure mercies of David*, Iſa. lv. 3. Acts xiii. 34. All the promiſes in him, are ſure promiſes; for, the covenant ſtands faſt in him; Pſal. lxxxix. 28. "My faithfulneſs and my mercy ſhall be with him," ſays God, ver. 24. His name is called, *Faithful and true*, Rev. xix. 11. You may depend upon his word, more than upon the oath of all the angels of heaven, and ſaints on earth; theſe are but changeable creatures, but he is the unchangeable God, and unchangeable truth itſelf.

(6.) Here is ground of faith, that all things are given into ſuch an open hand. He keeps an open door to all that will come, and an open hand to all that will take; and therefore ſays, Rev. xxii. 17. "Whoſoever will, let him come; and take of the water of life freely. Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; he that hath no money, come; buy wine and milk without money and without price," Iſa. lv. 1. As the Father hath an open hand to him, ſo he hath an open hand to us: Freely he hath received, and freely he gives. His hand, tho' it be a ſure hand, yet it is not a ſhut or a cloſed hand; no, by no means: it is an open hand, and a giving hand; and well were it for us, if we had a receiving hand: he gives freely, and we are called to receive freely. And hence he commands us to preach the goſpel to every creature, be what they will, of rational creatures among

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Adam's poſterity: although they have ſinned themſelves into the likeneſs of devils; yet, if they be creatures, preach the goſpel to them; offer Chriſt, and all things in him, to them: and he injoins his miniſters to be free and unhampered in their offers and proffers, ſaying, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Here is ſuch encouragement to faith, that ſinners may ſee that they are welcome to come, and take what they will, out of his ſtock.

2. Here is ground for faith and hope, that all things being given to Chriſt, there is nothing that ſinners need, but what is here; bread enough and to ſpare. There is an overflowing ocean of all good in Chriſt for ſinners, and that his grace doth infinitely exceed all our ſins, and all our wants. It is unbelief that doth diminiſh and limit the fulneſs of Chriſt: it ſhews the ſoul a multitude of ſins and wants, but it hides and conceals the fulneſs of Chriſt, and locks up his treaſures. It is true, people pretend this and that, as a hinderance and diſcouragement to their believing: but however the ground of their not cloſing with Chriſt is, it turns chiefly upon this, that they doubt of his fulneſs. Nay, ſay you, my doubt is of his *willingneſs;* but I have no doubt of his *fulneſs.* I fear you miſtake it, O ſinner; and that your chief doubt is about his fulneſs; and that your doubt of his willingneſs flows from the doubt of his fulneſs. What! is it poſſible that one can believe the immenſe fulneſs of Chriſt, as having all things in his hand, and yet, at the ſame time, believe that he is a niggard, and has nothing to ſpare? No, no: if you believe his fulneſs, you cannot but believe his willingneſs; and if ye doubt of his willingneſs, it flows from a doubt of his fulneſs; for theſe two go together: "In my Father's houſe, there is bread enough and to ſpare," Luke xv. 17. If you think there is nothing to ſpare for you, it is becauſe you think there is not bread enough, and fulneſs enough in Chriſt; for, if ye believe there is bread enough in him, then you will believe that there is to ſpare alſo. Examine, therefore, your faith of his fulneſs again: if you do not ſee there is enough in Chriſt, no wonder you do not ſee what a free heart he hath, when you do not ſee what a

free

free hand he hath. But, O ſinner! as the fulneſs of the Godhead is in him; ſo, if there were ten thouſand millions of worlds, and as many heavens full of men and angels, Chriſt would not be pinched to ſupply all their wants, and fill them all. Chriſt is the well of life; but, who knows how deep it is to the bottom? And the due conſideration of this might provoke all the world to come and draw water out of this well of ſalvation with joy, were it not that their eyes are ſhut, through unbelief; they ſee not the well, nor the overflowing fulneſs thereof.

3. Here is ground for faith and hope, in that as all things are given to Chriſt, ſo this inexhauſtible fulneſs in him is not for himſelf, but to be diſpenſed and communicated to poor ſinners: For, here is the Father's giving all things to the Son, as Mediator betwixt God and man. You will ſay, There is fulneſs enough in Chriſt; but what is that to me? Why, it wholly concerns thee; it is treaſured up in Chriſt for ſinners; yea, for the worſt of ſinners, that they may believe in him, and receive all things in him and with him: "He hath received gifts for men," Pſalm lxviii. 18. Ah! ſay you, but I am a rebellious devil. Well, it is even for the rebellious. Hence alſo, Eph. i. 22. "He is Head over all things to the church;" he hath all things in his hand. Well, but it is as head of the body the church: as treaſures and endowments of wit, and ſenſe, and the like, in the natural head, are for the body, and for the ſervice of it; ſo, the treaſures in Chriſt are for the ſervice of ſinners in the viſible church; ſinners, that are made ſaints already; and ſinners, who are to be made ſo, by his grace; and his grace that is in him, is publiſhed and preached to every creature under heaven, Col. i. 23. that every one may apply it to himſelf, and hear believingly, when he is ſaying, in effect, "I have all things in my "hand, and I have them for thee; I have life and ſalva- "tion, and I have them for thee; I have peace and par- "don, and I have them for thee; I have righteouſneſs, "ſanctification, and redemption, and I have them for "thee; I have grace and glory, and I have them for thee."

"thee." Therefore, go to him ſinner, and expect all from him; and ſay not, Alas! it is not for me; for, be who thou wilt, To thee is the word of this ſalvation ſent; and, therefore, receive not this grace of God in vain; for, it is unbelief that ſays, There is nothing for me: but faith ſays, It is all for me! O! he is a fit Saviour for me; he hath ſupplies of all wants for me; healing for me, help for me, all for me.

4. Here is ground for faith and hope to ſinners, in regard, that the Father's love to Chriſt, in giving all things into his hand, as the Saviour of ſinners, is juſt a diſcovery of God's ſovereign grace and love to ſinners, in and through Chriſt: and therefore, God is repreſented as ſitting upon a throne of grace, and the Lamb ſitting alſo upon the throne, where, in his Father's name, he diſpenſes the bleſſings that are given to him, and that as a glorious King, upon a gracious throne. He acts like a King, pardons like a King, ſaves like a King and Sovereign; and while he diſtributes all in a way of free grace, he pardons, becauſe he will; ſaves, becauſe he will; has mercy, becauſe he will have mercy. Why, what is the nature of ſovereign grace? It is the nature of it to act from itſelf, to itſelf, without conſideration of any thing in us; without reſpect either to the worthineſs or unworthineſs of the creature; neither reſtrained by our evil, nor conſtrained by our good: but all running out in a way of free love; Hoſ. xiv. 4. "I will heal their backſlidings; I will love them freely." "No matter then, may faith ſay, however vile and wretched I be, while I have to do with ſuch love; the Father loving the Son, and giving him all things, and that in love to the like of me." As free grace is the riſe and ſpring, ſo the exalting of free grace is the end of this great buſineſs of ſalvation in Chriſt. It is not what ſuch and ſuch ſinners do, or do not deſerve, that he conſiders; but what his grace can do for them, and what will make moſt for the glory of that grace, and what will ſet the crown, the brighteſt crown on the head of free grace. This is evident, Eph. i. 6. 12. 14. "To the praiſe and glory of his grace, wherein he hath *made us* accepted in the Beloved:—That we ſhould be

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to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt truſted in Chriſt:—Which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, unto the praiſe of his glory." His deſign is, that grace might reign, Rom. v. 21. and that ſinners might ſing the praiſes of free grace, free love. "O! who am I? ſays the ſoul that "hath obtained mercy: What! ſuch a rebel, and yet "pardoned! ſuch an enemy, and yet reconciled! ſuch "a black devil, and yet waſhed and made white in the "blood of the Lamb! ſuch a fiend of hell, and yet made "a favourite of heaven! O grace! grace!" This is God's deſign to magnify his grace and love in Chriſt upon ſinners, that they may love him much, who has pardoned much; and ſerve him lovingly, who has ſaved them freely.

5. Here is ground for faith, and encouragement for the hope of ſinners, that the Father having loved the Son, and given all things into his hand, it muſt be acceptable to the Father, that ſinners come to Chriſt for all things they need, and employ him for all things they have ado, and truſt in him for all things they want: "This is his commandment, that we believe in him," 1 John iii. 23. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him." Do you think God will be angry with you, if you come to Chriſt? No; you cannot pleaſe God better, you cannot honour him more: for this is his very deſign in giving all things to him, that you may come and get all things from him.

6. Here is ground for faith and hope, that the Father loves the Son, ſo as to give all things into his hand, in regard that, as it is acceptable to the Father, ſo it is honourable to the Son, that ſinners come to him for all things. As the Father gave all things to Chriſt, that he might put honour upon him; ſo the ſinner, giving employment to Chriſt, in all things he hath ado, puts honour upon him: and as it is the Father's honour, that he gave all things to Chriſt; ſo it is to the Son's honour, that he gave out of this fulneſs to ſinners, in a way of cauſing them to believe in him. And here is wonderful encouragement to faith and believing, that it is the glory and perfection of Chriſt, as Mediator, to receive ſinners, and give out himſelf, and all things to them, that they

need.

need. Chriſt has a two-fold glory, viz. the glory of his perſon, as the Son of God; and the glory of his office, as Mediator, and Head of the ſecond covenant: the former is infinitely complete and full, and can admit of no diminution, or augmentation, being unchangeably the ſame for ever; but the glory and perfection of his office, as Mediator, is ſtill more and more complete, the more ſinners he receives, and the more grace he gives out; and here there is an increaſe of his government, an increaſe of his glory, and perfection, and completeneſs: hence the church is called his fulneſs, Eph. i. 23. If the church be his fulneſs, then the more that is filled, by his receiving ſinners, and giving out grace to them, the more full and complete is he himſelf. His mediatory honour and perfection grows; and hence alſo the ſaints are called the glory of Chriſt, 2 Cor. viii. 23. As Chriſt alone is their glory, ſo they are his glory. How his glory? Not only becauſe they glorify him actively, but alſo becauſe he lays out his grace upon them, and they have nothing but by free gift from him; and therefore he is ſaid to be glorified in them. O! what encouragement to faith and believing is here! ſeeing thus you not only ſhall be glorified by Chriſt, and have everlaſting life by him; but alſo, you ſhall glorify Chriſt, and he ſhall have everlaſting honour by you. O Sirs, it is a part of his exaltation to give out of his fulneſs; for, 'He is exalted to give repentance and remiſſion of ſin.' O! how may unbelief ſink and die, and faith riſe and ſing, before this conſideration. "It is Chriſt's honour to "receive me; it is his glory to beſtow himſelf and his "grace upon me. The Father in love hath given all "things to him, that he may get honour and glory in "giving out all things needful for me."

IV. The Fourth thing propoſed, in the general method, was the Application of the ſubject.

Is it ſo, that the Father loves the Son, ſo as to give all things into his hand? Hence many precious truths may be ſeen in the ſeveral branches of the text and doctrine, namely, 1. That the Father loves the Son.—2. *That* he hath given all things into his hand. 3. That this

this is a ſtrong argument and encouragement for faith.

1*ſt*, Is it ſo, that the Father loveth the Son? Hence we may ſee,

1. The infinite love of God, in giving the Son of his love to be a Saviour and a ſacrifice for the like of us. O! "How excellent is his loving-kindneſs! And, how precious is his grace," that he ſhould love ſuch vile creatures, and make his love to flow in ſuch a channel as this of his love to his Son! Here is a love that paſſeth knowledge and comprehenſion, and they comprehend it beſt, who comprehend that it is incomprehenſible; they know it beſt who know that it paſſeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19. O! does the Father love the Son, as our Surety and Saviour? How aſtoniſhing ſhould the love of God, in Chriſt, be to us! Are we not obliged to love that God that loves our Redeemer; and loves him, becauſe he is our Redeemer?

2. See here a ſtrong argument to make uſe of in our application to God for what we need. We are to go to God, in Chriſt, and to plead upon the love he bears to Chriſt; there cannot be a ſtronger argument with God than this, the Father's love to the Son. This is the argument on which Chriſt pleads, and prays for his people, John xvii. 24. "Father, I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me; for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world." You hear commonly, that we ſhould pray in the name of Chriſt; and if we pray the Father, in his name, we ſhall be heard, whatſoever we aſk. What is it to pray the Father in Chriſt's name? It is even to raiſe our faith, and embolden our confidence with God, merely on the account of that high love the Father bears to the Son; and that, though we have nothing that is lovely in God's ſight; nay, but rather every thing that is lothſome: though we have nothing in us to make God love us, but a thouſand things to make him lothe us; yet we build our hope of acceptance and ſucceſs, upon the Beloved of the Father, and upon the Father's love to him. He is a bleſſed believer that can plead with God upon this

this argument, for he ſhall prevail: "And whatſoever ye ſhall aſk, in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do it," John xiv. 13, 14. "And in that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing: verily, verily, I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give it you," John xvi. 23. Where you ſee both the Father and the Son engaged to do it.

3. See how dear and precious Chriſt ſhould be to us; ſince the Father loves him, what ſhould move us to love him if this do not? How precious ſhould he be to us, who is precious unto God? It would argue that the mind of God and the Spirit of God was in us, if the Father's beloved were our beloved.

4. See here the right rule of our love to Chriſt, namely, to love him as the Father loves him. Wherein ſhould our love to Chriſt reſemble the Father's love? Why, the Father's love to the Son was evidenced in chooſing him to be our Saviour and Surety: ſo ſhould our love to Chriſt be manifeſted in making choice of him to be our Saviour and Surety; inſomuch, that as God hath laid all our help upon him, ſo we ſhould lay all our help where God hath laid it.—Again, the Father's love to the Son was evidenced in giving all things into his hand: thus ſhould our love to Chriſt be evidenced in putting all things in his hand as the Father doth; and particularly, you may put your hearts in his hand; that he may keep them; put your ſouls in his hand, that he may ſave them; put your plagues in his hand, that he may heal them; put your corruptions in his hand, that he may weaken and ſubdue them; put your wants in his hand, that he may ſupply them; put your work in his hand, that he may work all your works in you, and for you; put your burdens in his hand, that he may bear them: put all things in his hand, and thus evidence your love to him, by putting honour upon him, as a Prophet, to teach you; as a Prieſt, to pardon; and as a King, to conquer you by his grace, and crown you with his glory. This leads to the ſecond branch.

2dly, Is it ſo, that the Father hath evidenced his love

to

to his Son, by giving all things into his hand? Hence we may ſee,

1. How the infinite wiſdom of God hath outwitted the policy of the devil in his ſubtile attack upon, and in robbing the firſt Adam of all his ſtock, and thereby thinking to deſtroy all mankind: but, behold, the ſecond Adam appears with a ſtock incomparably greater than that which the firſt Adam loſt! Oh! what a happy change of Adams! what a happy change of covenants, and covenant-heads! The ſecond Adam is well-furniſhed, having all things in his hand; and there the ſtock is well ſecured in a hand that the devil dare not meddle with; in a hand that hath already bruiſed his head, and hath ſpoiled principalities and powers, and hath all things put in ſubjection under his feet, Heb. ii. 8.

2. See what a great want it is to want Chriſt; for, then they want all things: they have nothing, that are without Chriſt; they have no wiſdom, they have no ſtrength, no righteouſneſs. They are deſtitute of God; for God and all his perfection, are in him. They are deſtitute of the Spirit; for, the Spirit and all his graces are in Chriſt; they are deſtitute of all things; for, "All things are in him:" and he is all in all. Without Chriſt, ordinances are nothing but an empty ſhell; the ſacramental ſupper, without Chriſt, is but an empty table; ſermons, without Chriſt, are but an empty ſound; heaven, without Chriſt, is but an empty void: heaven would be but darkneſs, if the Lamb were not the light of the place. The ſinner, then, that remains without Chriſt, is nothing but a hell full of wickedneſs; empty of all good, and curſed in the want of all things.

3. See what a great thing it is to have Chriſt, becauſe they who have Chriſt, have all things, Rom. viii. 32. When God gives Chriſt, he cannot but with him, freely give all things; for, he hath given all things into his hand. O how happy are believers? All things are yours, becauſe Chriſt is yours, 1 Cor. iii. 21,—23. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; all is yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's." The believer's ſtock can never be ſpent; and

he can never ſee himſelf in miſery as long as he is looking to his Head. He can never loſe any thing but it is well repaid in Chriſt; and ſo long as Chriſt is to the fore, he has all things in him.

4. If the Father has given all things into Chriſt's hand, then hence we may be ſure of ſeveral particulars.

(1.) We may be ſure that we cannot go to a better hand for all that we need; for, he hath all things in his hand, both by a natural right, as God; and a donative right, as Mediator: therefore we may ſay, "To whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life," John vi. 68. To whom ſhould we go for light, and life, and ſtrength, and pardon, and peace, and perſeverance? To whom ſhould we go for the Spirit of faith, for the Spirit of repentance, for the Spirit of grace, and ſupplication?—Again, We may be ſure that it is eaſy with Chriſt to ſupply all our needs, and to give us all ſufficiency in all things, 2 Cor. ix. 8. He hath not far to go to bring our ſupply; no: he hath no more ado but open his hand; for, the Father hath given all things into his hand.

(2.) We may be ſure that all things ſhall work together for good, to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28. All things are for their ſakes, becauſe all things are in the hand of their Lord, and Head, and Huſband; and he can eaſily turn them about in his hand for accompliſhing his pleaſure and their profit. The worſt things, as well as the beſt, are in his hand; the moſt heavy croſſes, as well as comforts, are in his hand, and at his diſpoſal.

(3.) We may be ſure that the covenant is well-ordered in all things, and the covenant Head hath all things in his hand, who will do all things well; and will have this teſtimony from all his children, at the end of the day, that he hath done all things well. How can it be otherwiſe, when all things are put in his infinitely wiſe and gracious hand? It is unbelief to ſay, O! there is an ill-ordered providence; there is an ill-ordered trial. Stay a little, till faith look up and ſee all things in Chriſt's hand; and ſee all things managed by the hand of infinite wiſdom, infinite holineſs, infinite righteouſneſs, faithfulneſs, and truth,

truth, and then it will ſay, "O! well-ordered tempta-
"tion, that hath thus humbled me. O! well-ordered
"tribulation, that hath made me take reſt in God only.
"O! well-ordered chaſtiſements, that have driven me
"to my heavenly Father. O! well ordered loſſes and
"croſſes, that have weaned me from the world, and
"made Chriſt precious to me. O! well-ordered de-
"ſertion, that tended to imbitter that which ſeparated
"between God and me, and made his preſence more
"precious to me than ever. O! well-ordered victory,
"that ſin and Satan got over me, that tended to fill my
"heart with holy revenge againſt ſin, and made me ſet
"the powers of heaven againſt the powers of hell. O!
"well-ordered diſappointment, at ſuch and ſuch a time,
"that made me know that God was a Sovereign, to
"be waited on, and not to be limited to my time. O!
"well-ordered providence, that dried up the ſtreams
"of creature-comforts, and worldly enjoyments that I
"might betake myſelf to the fountain of all conſolation.
"O! well-ordered extremity, that ſo tended to make the
"Lord's appearing, at ſuch a time, to be wonderful and
"welcome; for, I was brought low, and he helped me."
All things are well-ordered, becauſe all things are in his hand. Again,

(4.) We may be ſure that the dead ſhall riſe again, according to the word of God, and that by the power of the Mediator; for, all things, even the duſt of the earth, is in his hand, and particularly the duſt of the ſaints; he hath undertaken to raiſe them up at the laſt day: John vi. 39, 40. 44, 45. "And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, that of all that which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day. And this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have everlaſting life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. No man can come unto me, except the Father which ſent me draw him, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day."

(5.) We may be ſure that dead ſinners may be raiſed to ſpiritual life, and dead hearts quickened to a new and

lively hope; for all things, and all hearts are in his hand, who is the reſurrection and the life: John xi. 25. "The hour is coming, ſays Chriſt, and now is," [and, O! may it be now at this occaſion!] "when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear, ſhall live." O! may the Spirit of life that is in Chriſt's hand, enter among theſe dead and dry bones, that they may live.

(6.) We may be ſure that miniſters can do nothing to communicate ſaving light to darkened minds, without power from Chriſt; for they are called ſtars in his right-hand; and they can give no light if he ſhut his hand: and while they, in particular, are ſaid to be in his hand, it ſays, that their gifts, and parts, and miniſtry, and ſucceſs; their labour, ſo long as here or elſewhere, is all at the ſpecial diſpoſal of the Lord Jeſus.

(7.) We may be ſure that nothing can fall out without his ordering and over-ruling providence; for, all things, and all the reins of government are in his hand. This may be ſilencing amidſt all the troubles that the church of God, and all the trials that the children of God, are tryſted with; "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it, Pſal. xxxix. 9. Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" I have done it, ſays the Lord: all the evil of afflictions are of his ordering: Who laid ſuch a man on a ſick bed? Who made ſuch a man a widower, and his children motherleſs? Who made ſuch a woman a widow, and her children fatherleſs? Who was it that made ſuch a man weak and ſickly, or ſmote ſuch an one with the gout, or gravel, or flux? "I have done it," ſays the Lord.—As to the evil of ſin, you muſt anſwer for it; but as to the evil of affliction, I will anſwer for it; that it is I that have done it: wherefore, "Be ſtill and know that I am God."

(8.) We may be ſure hence, that Chriſt is God, otherwiſe he were not capable of this honour to have all things given into his hand. What ſhall we think of thoſe that would diſhonour Chriſt, by with-holding all things from him, and denying his ſupreme Deity, making him incapable of receiving all things, or managing all things? *How contrary* to God the Father are Arian blaſphemers?

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The Father gives all things to him, and they would take all things from him, that the Father gave him; yea, and the things that the Father never gave him: his divine nature and eſſence is a thing the Father never gave him; for, he is eſſentially one and the ſame God with the Father; but, by diveſting him of this, they would take away all from him, and leave him nothing but a name.

(9.) We may be ſure, that the time is coming wherein Chriſt will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, Mat. xiii. 41. For, all things are under his hand, and under his feet; and he is Head over all things to the church. Many things are amiſs in the church of God; it is robbed and ſpoiled, in many reſpects; but he that hath all things in his hand rules, and over-rules: let our eyes be towards him for better days; and though our eyes ſhould be ſhut before we ſee them, may we live and die in the faith of this, that the Lord will appear in his glory, to build up Zion; and that at laſt the church militant ſhall be triumphant.

(10.) We may be ſure, that Chriſt is a pearl of great price, and that he is the money that anſwers all things; becauſe all things are given into his hand: and we ſhould count all things but loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt. There is that in Chriſt that will anſwer all our needs, all our wants, all our neceſſities, all our deſires, all our hopes.

(11.) We may be ſure, that all things ſhall be fulfilled, whatſoever he hath promiſed; for, all things are in his hand. We need not doubt of his performing his promiſe; for, what he hath promiſed to give, he hath in his hand to give, and will do it in his own time.

(12.) We may be ſure, that all things, whatſoever we aſk, believing, we ſhall receive: "And whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son: If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do it, John xiv. 13, 14. And in that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing: verily, verily, I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give it you," John xvi. 23.

(13.) We may be ſure, that preparation for a commu-

nion-table is to be had only from the Lord Jeſus; for, as all things come of him, 1 Chron. xxix. 14.; ſo the preparation of the heart is from the Lord. We are to look to him for a communion-frame; and what is that? I think the beſt communion-frame is a believing frame: and what for a frame is that? Really, I ſuppoſe, it is the frame that is the leaſt known: it is a frame wherein the ſoul comes to be denied to all frames that it uſes to rely upon, and think much of, and come to ſay, in effect, to this purpoſe, Though the Lord ſhould deny me a lively frame, a mourning frame, a melting frame; yea, though he ſhould allow me nothing in my own hand, yet this ſhall ſuffice me, if I can go believing and rejoicing in this, that all my ſtock is in the hand of Chriſt. I have nothing to confide in but Chriſt, as the Lord my righteouſneſs and ſtrength: it is a frame wherein the perſon is ſenſible that he has nothing, but yet goes away leaning upon him whom the Father loves, and to whom he hath given all things. This leads,

3*dly*, To the third claſs of inferences, from the other part of the doctrine, namely, That the Father's love to Chriſt, in giving all things into his hand, is a ſtrong argument and encouragement for faith: this I have demonſtrated already. And if it be ſo, hence we may ſee,

1. That there is nothing to hinder our matching and marrying with the Son of God by faith; for *All things are ready*, therefore we may come to the marriage, before you come to the marriage-ſupper, Mat. xxii. 4. *All things are ready*; for, all things are in the Bridegroom's hand: "The Father loves him, and hath given all things into his hand."—The wedding-garment is ready for you to put on; pardon of ſin, and peace with God, and all is ready in his hand to give you. But, ſay you, I am not ready. Why, what want you to make you ready? Do you want faith, repentance, love, or any grace, to make you ready? Do you want ſuch and ſuch a humbled, and believing, and penitent heart to make you ready? And will you never come till you have theſe things? Why then, you will never come at all; for theſe things are nowhere to be had but in Chriſt's hand, where all things

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are. And therefore, in God's name, I call you, who are ſenſible of your want of all theſe good things, to come and join hands with Chriſt, and put your hand, as it were, in his hand, wherein all things are, and you ſhall not want; for, all things are ready in his hand to give you. Therefore,

2. It is no matter though ſinners have nothing to bring alongſt with them to Chriſt; though they are poor, deſtitute of all things, they are welcome; yea, the more poor, the more welcome to him that hath all things in his hand to give. What though you are nothing, and have nothing, and are a thouſand times worſe than nothing, and crying out in your heart, Oh! I have no faith, no love, no grace, no good about me, and all things wanting: is that your caſe? I will tell you man, woman, you are the welcomeſt perſon in all the world to come to Chriſt, who has all things given into his hand: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word," Iſa. lxvi. 2. As for you that are rich, and increaſed with goods, and ſtand in need of nothing; and are ready to ſay you have many good things, you have a good heart to God, and you have good frames, and good deſires, and are good Chriſtians, and good neighbours; and do ſo many good duties, and think you have ſo many good things; really I fear our Lord gets little honour from you; for, you have ſome money, and you will not come to take all things freely out of Chriſt's hand, without money, and without price. Indeed, if people go to a public change, they can get nothing without money; but if you go to a king's palace, it is an affront to the prince, if you ſhould offer money for any thing. Oh! what an affront is it to the King of kings, who has all things in his hand to give, for you to offer him money? I am not offering that, ſay you; yes, you do it, when you ſay, in effect, "I have ſo many good things "about me: therefore, I hope, he will give me more; "I am none of the worſt of folks, I hope; and there-"fore, I truſt he will ſave me." You are not yet for ſalvation by free grace, according to the new covenant; no: you are ſtanding upon the rotten covenant of

works. If God have mercy on you, he will bring you to nothing, that he may bring you to Chriſt for all things.

3. Hence ſee the nature of faith, and a mark and evidence of its being true ſaving faith, or believing unto everlaſting life. It is a faith that believes the Father loves the Son, and hath given all things into his hand; and reſts content with ſuch a Chriſt as this: "Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat." Examine your faith on this; Have you a faith that believes the Father's love to the Son, and giving all things into his hand, ſo as you are well content that all your ſtock of righteouſneſs and ſtrength is in Chriſt's hand? This is a mark that will diſtinguiſh the believer from the cloſeſt hypocrite. It is the ſoundeſt faith that can rejoice in this that all things are in Chriſt's hand. Hypocrites may have ſomething *from* Chriſt, but they have nothing *in* him; they cannot make this their boaſt, that they have all things in Chriſt: but let hypocrites boaſt of their common gifts, common graces, common attainments, or whatever they may have from Chriſt; yet theſe only have moſt from him who are content, and glad at their hearts, that their all is in him; and that their ſtock is in his hand. Hence believers are ſaid to be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus. Hypocrites may be, like the ivy, growing up the tree very cloſe, and receiving ſap therefrom: and yet it grows upon its own root. They may grow up in a profeſſion, and receive the ſap of common influences from Chriſt, and yet they grow upon the root of the old covenant, were never rooted in Chriſt: they have only ſomethings from him, but nothing in him. But the believer is rooted in Chriſt, and has his all from him, into whoſe hand the Father hath given all things. Hence the Spirit of Chriſt may be upon a hypocrite, in reſpect of common operations; but the Spirit of Chriſt is in the believer, in reſpect of ſpecial inhabitation. The hypocrite is like a pool of water, maintained only from without, by the clouds; but the believer is like a well of water, ſpringing up to everlaſting life; for, he hath not only many things from Chriſt, but he hath all things in *him, and* lives upon him for all things.

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4. And laſtly, We may hence ſee the duty of all ſinners, as well as ſaints, as long as they have ſin and want about them, namely, to come to Chriſt for all things; becauſe the Father loves him, and hath given all things into his hand. O what a full-handed Saviour is here! and ſuch a full and ſolid foundation for faith, that you can have no objection againſt coming to Chriſt, but what the text will anſwer. Chriſt hath all offices for ſaving ſinners: the Father that gave him all things, hath anointed him to all ſaving offices. If you be ignorant; he is a Prophet, to reveal the will of God to you: if you be guilty; he is a Prieſt, to reconcile God and you, and make peace by the blood of the croſs: if you be a bond ſlave to ſin and Satan; he is a King, to ranſom you from the power of theſe enemies. He to whom the Father hath given all things, to him he hath given all offices ſuiting your various caſes; and, therefore, be your caſe what it will, there is no ground to ſtay at a diſtance from him.—As he hath given him all offices, ſo he hath given him all relations ſuitable to our need; therefore in ſcripture he is ſet forth in manifold relations wherein he ſtands to ſinners in the viſible church, namely, as a Head, a Huſband, a Bridegroom, a Phyſician, an Advocate: therefore, whatever relation he claims to himſelf, claim you to be the party related to him, ſaying, "If he be a Head, I will be a member; if he be a "Huſband, I will be a wife; if he be a Bridegroom, "I will be the bride; if he be a Phyſician, I will be "the patient; if he be an Advocate, I will be the client." Yea, he is given to be all things that we need, and all things are given into his hand. Nothing, therefore, in the world ſhould hinder your coming to Chriſt, and believing in him? Are you objecting againſt believing in him? No doubt you are; and yet I will tell you, I know of no objection you have, but what this doctrine will be an argument and a reaſon for faith, inſtead of being a reaſon againſt it.

You object, that you are a moſt prodigious guilty ſinner: Why, that is a reaſon for your coming to him, becauſe the pardon of all ſin is in his hand; he had power on earth to forgive ſin: and hath he not power in heaven?

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Are you a filthy ſinner? Why, that is a reaſon for looking to him; becauſe the waſhing away of all filthineſs is in his hand; and therefore he ſays, "If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me. The blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin."—Are you over-run with maladies, plagues, and diſeaſes; ſuch as, deadneſs, darkneſs, hardneſs of heart, and enmity? Well, that is a reaſon why you ſhould come to him; for, the healing of all diſeaſes is in his hand; his name is, *The Lord, the healer.*—Are you a bond ſlave to the devil, and a captive to ſin? Why, that is a reaſon for your coming to him; for, the looſing of all bonds is in his hand: and, "If the Son make you free, you ſhall be free indeed."—Are you under the power of luſts and corruptions? That is a reaſon for your coming to him; for, the ſubduing of all corruptions is in his hand: "All power in heaven and earth is given to him.—Are you burdened, and under heavy loads? That is a reaſon why you ſhould come to him; for, the bearing of all burdens is in his hand: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Caſt your burden upon the Lord, and he will ſuſtain thee."—Are you under heavy croſſes? That is a good reaſon for your coming to him; for, the ſanctifying of all croſſes is in his hand: "By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away ſin. In their affliction they will ſeek me early."—Are you preſſed with innumerable objections, that you think no miniſter in the world can anſwer? Why, that is a reaſon for your coming to Chriſt; for, the anſwering of all objections is in his hand: "I have put my Spirit upon him," ſays the Father, "and he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles."—Are you oppreſſed with fears? Behold the diſpelling of all fears is in his hand; and he can force them away with a word, ſaying, *Fear not, only believe.*—Are you bewildered in the miſt of darkneſs and ignorance, not knowing what way to take? That is a reaſon for believing in him, who is given to be a light to lighten the Gentiles. "He that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light, let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God. I will lead the blind in a way *that they know* not, and in paths that they have not known.

known. I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtreight."—Are you under the power of unbelief, unable to believe? Well, that is a reaſon why you need to believe, that he hath power to make you believe: it is given to him, as Mediator, to be the author and finiſher of faith. Look to him for his drawing power. Are you under the power of obſtinacy, unwilling to believe? Why, that is ſad; and yet it is the reaſon why you ſhould believe in him, and to believe that he is given to make you willing; "Thy people ſhall be willing in a day of thy power."—Have you nothing at all in hand? Why, ſo much the better; if you can believe that all things are in Chriſt's hand, then ſhould your caſe be as that of the apoſtle, *Having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things.*

"But, ſays the carnal heart, what doctrine is this, "nothing but believe! believe that all things are in "Chriſt's hand! what advantage is this to practical "religion? This muſt be ſome ſtrange doctrine." Well, I doubt not but it is ſtrange to fleſh, and to the legal heart that would have all things in its own hand; and cannot be perſuaded to believe that this way of believing is the way to heaven: "What! muſt there "be no doing at all, nor working?" Why, man, I muſt tell you, with the apoſtle, that, "By the deeds of the law no fleſh living can be juſtified:" but if you be for right goſpel-doing, acceptable to God, then know it, in God's name I inform you, that the beſt believer is the beſt doer; for, if once you could believe that the Father hath given all things into Chriſt's hand, and believe it with application, that all your ſtock of righteouſneſs and ſtrength is in Chriſt, then you ſhould be able to do all things, through Chriſt ſtrengthening you, Phil. iv. 13. It is ſtrange, and yet it is as true as it is ſtrange, they that are for the way of doing, they can do nothing; whereas they that are for the way of believing, they can do all things: for, "All things are poſſible to him that believeth;" becauſe, when he is weak, then he is ſtrong, 2 Cor. xii. 10.: weak in himſelf, but ſtrong in the Lord; no ſufficiency to think a good thought, but his ſufficiency is of God, whoſe ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.—Gladly, therefore, doth he glory in his infirmities, that

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the power of Chriſt may reſt upon him. Happy therefore is that ſoul, which, in the ſenſe of the want of all things, can believe and be joyfully content in this, that the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that thus believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

May he, who hath all things in his hand, open his hand and give the Spirit of faith, that ſo faith may come by hearing of the glorious object of faith *.

ACTION - SERMON.

JOHN iii. 35.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

[The ſecond Sermon on this text.]

IT is in the holy and over-ruling providence of him, in whoſe hand all things and all hearts are, that I have been inclined to purſue this ſubject, on this ſolemn occaſion. I have not found my mind determined to enter on any other theme; and, I ſuppoſe, no ſubject can be more ſuitable to the work of the day; for, we cannot commemorate the boundleſs love of Chriſt to us, in dying for our ſins; nor can we remember it more effectually, than by remembering the Father's bountiful love to him, for his ſo doing; and that evidenced by his giving all things into his hand.

Nothing, in the world, will ſweeten the remembrance of Chriſt's love to us, ſo much as the believing remembrance

* Here ends the firſt ſermon on this text, preached at Kinglaſſy. What follows was delivered immediately before the celebration of *the ſacrament* of the Lord's ſupper at Dunfermline, June 27. 1731.

brance of the Father's love to him: even as nothing can provoke us more to put honour upon Chriſt, than to ſee how much honour the Father puts upon him; and for this end, "That all men might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Why, what honour has the Father put upon him? It is even the greateſt honour; and that wherein our greateſt happineſs lies: *He hath given all things into his hand.*

As this is laid down here for a foundation of faith, if you compare it with ver. 36. and with Mat. xi. 27, 28.; ſo here we have a full feaſt, and plentiful proviſion for our faith to feed upon this day, and all in the beſt hand: *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

The doctrinal obſervation we deduced from theſe words, was as follows, namely,

Observ. "That the Father's love to the Son, evidenced by his giving all things into his hand, is a ſtrong argument and encouragement for faith to believe in him."

The method laid down, for proſecuting this ſubject, was the following, *viz.*

I. I would ſpeak a little of the Father's love to the Son.

II. Speak of this evidence of the Father's love: and that, 1. Shew ſome of theſe things the Father gives to the Son. 2. Notice the import of the expreſſion, *He gave all things into his hand.* 3. How this evidences the Father's love to him. 4. Why he hath thus manifeſted his love to him.

III. How this love of the Father, thus evidenced, in giving all things into his hand, is a ground of Faith.

IV. Make ſome Application of the whole.

We have already diſcuſſed the doctrinal part of this ſubject, and likewiſe made ſome improvement thereof: what I now intend further, upon this ſubject, is by way of Exhortation. And the exhortation I would offer this day, from this doctrine, is, That all that hear me would come to this full and ſufficient Saviour, believing, that

that the Father hath furniſhed him with all things neceſſary for your everlaſting ſalvation; for, he that thus believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life in him. That which is the great matter and ground of faith, is alſo the great motive and argument for it, namely, that the Father hath, in love to him, and to ſinners in him and through him, giving all things into his hand.

That I may, therefore, purſue and enforce this exhortation to believe in Chriſt, upon this ground, I ſhall, as the Lord may enable, obſerve the following method of diſcourſe.

Firſt, That our faith may be fixed in this truth, I ſhall offer ſome demonſtrations of it; and evidence that all things are given into the hand of Chriſt, the Father's beloved.

Secondly, That faith may be cleared on this head, I ſhall notice a little the beauty of this diſpoſure of infinite wiſdom, in giving all things into Chriſt's hand.

Thirdly, That our faith may be enlarged and widened in the view thereof, I ſhall ſpeak a little of the extent of the matter, the treaſure, that Chriſt hath in him, while it is ſaid that all things are given into his hand.

Fourthly, That faith may be enlightened and aſſiſted further herein, I ſhall conſider the manner how all things are in the hand of Chriſt.

Fifthly, That faith may be quickened and excited, I ſhall offer ſome motives and conſiderations, ariſing from, and accompanying this truth, that all things are given into Chriſt's hand.

Sixthly, That our faith may be regulated and ſquared, according to the goſpel rule, I ſhall cloſe with a few directions, as the Lord may enable.

And, O Sirs, ſince faith comes by hearing of the object of faith, by hearing what Chriſt, the object of faith, is, and what he hath, let your eye be towards him, and your ear be open to hear what is ſaid of him; that, in hearing, you may believe, without ſeeking to draw faith out of your own heart and bowels, whence you will *never find* it. If there be any ſubject in the world, the

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hearing whereof tends, through grace, to work ſaving faith, it is this, that faith, and all grace, all good, all fulneſs, all things, are in Chriſt's hand.

Firſt, The firſt thing I have propoſed, that faith may be fixed, and ſettled, and aſſured of this truth, is to offer ſome demonſtrations thereof. And, O that it may be in the demonſtration of the Spirit and with power.

I ſhall only premiſe, that when we ſay, All things are in the hand of Chriſt, we mean not only generally, all things in the kingdom of providence; becauſe his kingdom rules over all; and, "He is the Head of all things unto the church," Eph. i. 22. but alſo, particularly, all things in the kingdom of grace; of which he ſays, "My kingdom is not of this world," John xviii. 46. But bleſſed be God, he hath not ſaid, his ſpiritual kingdom is not *in* this world; but it is not *of* this world: he hath his ſpiritual inviſible kingdom in the hearts of his people in this world; who, though they are in it, yet they are not of it, but, choſen out of the world; yet, ſometimes this kingdom of his is viſible, in the remarkable tokens of his ſpiritual preſence in his ordinances. And, O for many ſuch tokens this day! But now, that all things are in Chriſt's hand, will be evident from the following demonſtrations.

1. Demonſtration of it is this, "If they that inherit "Chriſt, inherit all things; then all things are in his "hand: but ſo it is, they that inherit him, inherit all "things, 1 Cor. iii. 21,—23. For all things are yours, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or "life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; all "are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's." This golden chain, together with all things preſent, and all things to come, is linked to the believer, becauſe he is united unto Chriſt. The believer hath an intereſt in Chriſt; by an intereſt in Chriſt, he hath an intereſt in God; and by an intereſt in God, he hath an intereſt in all things. As Solomon ſays, *Money anſwers all things;* becauſe all things that are vendible may be procured by it: ſo Chriſt anſwers all things to the believer. He is meat and drink to them; *My fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*—He is gold and ſilver to them.

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"The merchandize of wiſdom is better than ſilver; and the gain thereof than pure gold." "Come, buy of me gold tried in the fire."—He is raiment to them when naked; and they put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.—He is health to them when diſeaſed; "I am the Lord that healeth thee."—He is all things to them; "He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7. Why? It is added, "I will be his God."

2. Demonſtration of this truth, is, "If all things, "without Chriſt, be but empty nothing, then all things "only are in Chriſt's hand: but ſo it is, all things are "nothing withhut Chriſt; "Vanity of vanity, ſays the "preacher, all is vanity," Eccl. i. 2. All the riches, pleaſures, profits, and preferments of the world are but emptineſs; your wiſdom, your parts, your children, your lands, your revenues, without Chriſt, can amount to nothing; they are but like cyphers without a figure. It is ſaid of believers, 2 Cor. vi. 10. Having nothing, they poſſeſs all things; becauſe, though they had nothing in the world, yet, having Chriſt, they have all things: and, on the other hand, it may be truly ſaid of the wicked and unbelieving, that, having all things, they poſſeſs nothing; becauſe, though they had all things in the world at their will, yet, being without Chriſt, they have nothing: all they have is but emptineſs; yea, all they have is a curſe, becauſe they have not Chriſt.—And thus all things, without him, are not only nothing, but worſe than nothing.

3. Demonſtration of this truth, is, "If all things in "the world be but a ſhadow of what is in Chriſt; then "all things are in Chriſt's hand ſubſtantially: but ſo it "is, all good things in the world are but ſhadows of "what is in Chriſt." Outward riches are but a ſhadow of the unſearchable riches of Chriſt: outward life is but a ſhadow of him who is the way, the truth, and the life: outward liberty is but a ſhadow of that freedom that is to be had in Chriſt: "If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed," John viii. 36.; importing, that no freedom is freedom indeed and in truth but this: outward reſt is but a ſhadow of the reſt that is to be had in him; "*Come* to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and

I will give you reſt." The ſun in the firmament is but a ſhadow of the Sun of righteouſneſs, and of his glory: roſes and lilies are but ſhadows of his beauty, who is the roſe of Sharon, and lily of the valley: rivers and fountains are but ſhadows of his fulneſs, who is the fountain of living waters; not a fountain cloſed, but a fountain opened to us: plants and trees are but a ſhadow of the verdure of him who is the plant of renown, the tree of life. All things that have any excellency in them are but ſhadows of him in whom all excellencies do concentre. All the ſtars of creature-excellencies are but ſhadows of him who is the bright and morning Star.

4. Demonſtration is, "If the knowledge of all things "be worth nothing, in reſpect of the knowledge of "Chriſt; then all things are only in his hand: but ſo "it is, that all things are but loſs and dung in reſpect of "the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt, Phil. iii. 8." The great apoſtle deſired to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified; yea, this is life eternal to know him, and God in him, John xvii. 3. The knowledge of Chriſt is the moſt certain, the moſt profitable, and the moſt comfortable knowledge.—It is the moſt certain knowledge: we know other things only by their ſhape and ſpecies; but we know Chriſt by the Spirit: we know other things by the teſtimony of men; but we know Chriſt by the teſtimony of the Spirit: now, as the teſtimony of the Spirit is more certain than the teſtimony of man; ſo the knowledge of Chriſt is the moſt certain knowledge. It is the moſt profitable; it is a knowledge that gives us the poſſeſſion of the things we know: by the knowledge of Chriſt, we are poſſeſſed of Chriſt; by our knowledge of his fulneſs, we are poſſeſſed of his fulneſs; "By his knowledge ſhall my righteous Servant juſtify many." If it be life eternal to know him, ſurely it is moſt profitable. It is the moſt comfortable: all our want of comfort and ſatisfaction flows from our want of the knowledge of Chriſt; and all our true comfort ariſes from the knowledge and view of him. John wept, becauſe he thought none was able to open the ſeals of the book of God's decrees, concerning man's redemption; but, upon the

diſcovery of Chriſt, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the weeping was ſtilled; he wept no more, Rev. v. 4, 5.

5. Demonſtration, or ſcriptural argument, is, "If "Chriſt can ſupply all wants; then all things muſt be "in his hand: but ſo it is, he can ſupply all wants "which we labour under, Phil. iv. 19. My God ſhall "ſupply all your needs, according to his riches in glory, "by Chriſt Jeſus." Whatever you labour under, there is that in Chriſt which can ſupply and ſupport.—Do you labour under deſertion? Then he ſays, "I will never leave nor forſake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.—Do you labour under corruption and bondage to ſin? It is he that ſays, "Sin ſhall not have dominion over you," Rom. vi. 14.—Do you labour under temptation? It is he who, as the God of peace, will tread down Satan under your feet, Rom. xvi. 20.; and ſays, 'My grace ſhall be ſufficient for you.' Do you labour under weakneſs? It is he who ſays, "My ſtrength ſhall be perfected in thy weakneſs," 2 Cor. xii. 9. Do you labour under affliction, inward or outward? "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."—Do you labour under fears of public calamities upon the land? It is ſaid of him, "This man ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our land."—Do you labour under the fears of death? It is he who ſays, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction. Repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes."

6. Demonſtration is, "If Chriſt can ſatisfy all the "deſires, ſuit all the conditions, and anſwer all the ob-"jections of ſinners; then he muſt have all things: but "ſo it is, he can ſatisfy all deſires of ſinners; for he is the "Deſire of all nations, and every thing deſirable is in "him; "*He is altogether lovely* [or ALL DESIRES, as the "word imports], Song v. 16. made up of deſirable things." Is worth deſirable? He is the treaſure hid in the field. Is wiſdom deſirable? "In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. Wiſdom hath builded her houſe," Prov. ix. 1.: it is in the plural number, *wiſdoms*. Chriſt is a compound of wiſdom.—He can ſuit all conditions of poor ſinners: there is no condition you can be in, *but he hath* a promiſe ſuited to it: ſo that there is in Chriſt

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what ſuits all caſes; for, the promiſes are nothing elſe but the veins where the blood and fulneſs of Chriſt doth run. Are you wandering? Chriſt ſays, *I am the way.*—Are you in darkneſs? Chriſt ſays, *I am the light of the world.*—Are you in deadneſs? Chriſt ſays, *I am the reſurrection and the life.*—Are you guilty? Chriſt ſays, he is the Lord our righteouſneſs.—Are you polluted? Chriſt ſays, he is the Fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs.—Are you dejected? Chriſt ſays, He will ſend the Comforter.—Do you need protection? Chriſt affirms, that he is the Rock of ages, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength.—Do you need direction? Chriſt is the wonderful Counſellor, and he ſays, *I will lead the blind by a way they know not.*—As Chriſt can ſatisfy all deſires and ſuit all conditions, ſo he can anſwer all objections.—If any of you ſay, "Alas! I am a poor "loſt ſinner." Then Chriſt ſays, *I came to ſeek and to ſave that which is loſt*, Luke xix. 10.—"Oh! ſays ano-"ther, I am unrighteous, and I am a great ſinner." Well, Chriſt ſays, *I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*, Matth. ix. 13. "Oh! ſays a third, but I "cannot repent." Well, it is anſwered, "Him hath God exalted to give repentance to Iſrael, and remiſſion of ſins," Acts v. 31. "Alas! cries another, but I cannot turn "from ſin." It is anſwered, Chriſt is ſent to bleſs you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities, Acts iii. 26. It is his work to turn away tranſgreſſion from Jacob; to turn you from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. "Ah! but I have no might or ability "to come unto Chriſt." It is anſwered, "He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might he createth ſtrength," Iſa. xl. 29, 30, 31. He is the Author of faith, Heb. xii. 2. "Oh! but I have ſinned to the uttermoſt." Why, then, he tells you, he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, Heb. vii. 25. "Alas! I am a backſlider, and "bent to backſliding." To this it is anſwered, "I will heal their backſlidings; I will love them freely," Hoſ. xiv. 4. "Oh! but though I ſhould come to him, I cannot fol-"low him; his ſheep follow him." Well, what ſays he to this? Even that "He will carry the lambs in his arms, and gently lead thoſe that are with young," Iſa. xl. 11.—Whatever the objection is, he can anſwer it.

whatever the caſe is, he can remede it; whatever the deſire is, he can ſatisfy it: why then, all things muſt be in his hand; and no wonder, for all the treaſures of divine plenitude and fulneſs are in his hand.—This may ſuffice to demonſtrate the truth hereof.

Secondly, The next thing propoſed, was, in order to clear our faith in this matter, to notice the beauty of this diſpoſure of infinite wiſdom, in giving all things into Chriſt's hand. And,

1. In this contrivance infinite wiſdom hath conſulted the Father's right and property, and manifeſted that he is the giver of all things, and the poſſeſſor of all things; inſomuch that, when he gives all things, he cannot loſe thereby the poſſeſſion of any thing he gives; for, the Father's giving all things into Chriſt's hand doth not imply, that he alienates his own right. It is true, when we give a thing to another, we loſe a right to it; but it is not ſo with God; for when he gives all things to Chriſt, and when he gives Chriſt, and all things in him to us, he ſtill keeps his right to all that he gives: "All things are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Thus, what the Father gives into Chriſt's hand, remains ſtill in the Father's hand; "And I give unto them eternal life, and none ſhall pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one," John x. 28.

2. In this contrivance infinite wiſdom hath conſulted the Son's right and title. This donative right that he hath, as Mediator, as it is well adapted to him, who, as God, hath the ſame eſſential right and title to all things with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt. For, as to his eternal Godhead, he is the everlaſting Father, Iſa. ix. 6. whoſe goings forth have been of old, from everlaſting, Micah v. 2. "By whom are all things, and we by him," 1 Cor. viii. 6.—And, as Mediator, his donative right is attended with an acquiſitive right, by his purchaſe, by which he hath merited and obtained a name above every name, and a being head over all things to the church, *Phil.* ii. 9. Eph. v. 23.—A bellical right, by conqueſt, *making the* people to fall under him, Pſal. cx. 4.; making

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them willing in a day of his power, Pſal. cx. 3.; and overcoming thoſe that make war with him, Rev. xvii. 14.—"He is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf," Heb. ii. 8. An hereditary right, being the heir of all things, Heb. i. 2. and being the firſt-born, higher than the kings of the earth, Pſalm lxxxix. 27.; the firſt-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, Col. i. 18.

3. In this contrivance, infinite wiſdom hath conſulted the ſecurity of the ſtock and treaſure, with which Chriſt is intruſted; and taken the beſt method for ſecuring all things in his hand. We will find it is done with a ſpecial ſolemnity: It is done by ſolemn election, he being choſen to this truſt; "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth," Iſaiah xlii. 1. It is done by ſolemn tranſaction between the Father and him, when the counſel of peace was between them both; "I have made a covenant with my choſen," Pſalm lxxxix. 3.—It was done by a ſolemn call, a formal and legal call; "I the Lord have called thee, and given thee for a covenant of the people, a light to the Gentiles," Iſa. xlii. 6.; and ſo to be all things to his people. It was done by a ſolemn commiſſion, under the broad ſeal of heaven, whereby he is authorized to be all things that ſinners need: "Him hath God the Father ſealed," John vi. 2. All things are given to him with the ſolemnity of a promiſe; ſuch as, Pſal. lxxii. 8,—11. "His dominion ſhall be from ſea to ſea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." To the ſame purpoſe, Pſalm lxxxix. 24, 25. "But my faithfulneſs and my mercy ſhall be with him: and in my name ſhall his horn be exalted. I will ſet his hand alſo in the ſea, and his right-hand in the rivers." Yea, all things are given into his hand with the ſolemnity of an oath; Pſalm lxxxix. 34, 35. "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth: once have I ſworn by my holineſs, I will not lye unto David." Pſalm cx. 4,—7. "The Lord hath ſworn, and will not repent, thou art a Prieſt for ever, after the order of Melchiſedeck," &c.: not only ſo, but a King, for ever, upon a throne, ruling over all things; "The Lord, at thy right-hand, ſhall ſtrike thro' kings in his wrath.

he ſhall judge among the heathen; he ſhall fill the places with the dead bodies; he ſhall wound the head over many countries."—This vaſt treaſure, then, is well ſecured.

4. In this contrivance, infinite wiſdom hath conſulted the fitneſs of the great Truſtee, to whom all things are granted. O what wiſdom is in this, that he who is, ſo to ſpeak, the centre of the glorious Trinity, I mean, the middle perſon, ſhould be the centre of all things: Thus he hath, as it were, conſulted the convenience of all things. How fit is it that all things ſhould move towards their centre, and meet there! He is the centrical place, not only the middle perſon of the glorious Trinity, but alſo the Mediator between God and man, that all things being between God and man, they might have all things common between them, for his own glory and their good. Read concerning this, Eph. i. 10. "That he might gather together in one, all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him." All things good and bad may be ſaid to be given into his hand: all evil things; ſuch as, the devil, the world, and ſin, and death, that they may be ruled and over-ruled: and all good things, that they may be managed and ſecured. All our enemies are put in his hand, that they may be deſtroyed; and all our bleſſings put in his hand, that they may be preſerved. None but Chriſt was capable of ſuch a truſt; no mere creature, among men or angels, was capable to bear this glory: "It is he that builds the temple of the Lord, and bears the glory," Zech. vi. 13. None but he was capable to be the diſpoſer of all wants and diſpenſer of all bleſſings: therefore he is made the general receiver of all things.

5. In this contrivance, infinite wiſdom hath conſulted the pleaſure of all parties, even the pleaſure of all the perſons of the glorious Trinity; "It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell," Col. i. 19.: where you may notice, that the word FATHER is not in the original; and, therefore, this work of repoſing all things, all fulneſs in Chriſt, may be looked upon, not only as the work of the Father, but the work of the whole glorious Trinity. It pleaſed Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, *that in* Chriſt ſhould all fulneſs dwell; that into his hand

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ſhould all things be given: the Father propoſed, the Son accepted, and the Holy Ghoſt conſented, that in Chriſt, as Mediator, ſhould all fulneſs dwell; and this was done with rapturous pleaſure. It pleaſed the Father to propoſe it; for, he ſays, "I have laid help upon One that is mighty:" It pleaſed the Son to accept; for, he ſays, *Lo I come!* It pleaſed the Holy Ghoſt to conſent; for, he reſted on Chriſt, and furniſhed him for his work: "The Spirit of the Lord God was upon me, for he hath anointed me," Iſa. lxi. 1. This raviſhing pleaſure, of the glorious Trinity, is not only plainly imported in the words of our text, where it is the Father's love to the Son, as our Saviour and Surety, is made the ſpring of his giving all things into his hand; but you have it plainly expreſſed, Iſa. xlii. 1. "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth." And, Prov. viii. 30. "Then," ſays Chriſt, namely, from all eternity, "I was by him, as one brought up with him; I was daily his delight." Now, in what reſpect was he the Father's delight? Even in reſpect of his rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights being with the ſons of men. The Father delighted in me, becauſe I delighted in the ſons of men, in the very proſpect of ſaving and redeeming them by my blood. He delighted to ſee him delighting in this mediatorial ſervice, for which all things were given into his hand, with infinite pleaſure. And, as God conſults his own pleaſure herein, ſo the pleaſure of all poor ſinners, for whoſe ſake and benefit all things were given unto him: and hence, whenever the glory of this method of ſalvation, through Chriſt, is open to the heart of any poor ſinners, they are not only pleaſed and ſatisfied, but raviſhed and filled with ſweet wonder, and ſtrong conſolation, Heb. vi. 18.; and rejoice with joy unſpeakable, 1 Pet. i. 8. The ſoul is, by a glorious and raviſhing power, carried out to reſt in this device, as every way worthy of God, and every way ſuitable and ſatisfying to their caſe.

6. In this contrivance, infinite wiſdom hath conſulted the credit and honour of all concerned. He hath herein conſulted the credit and honour of his own majeſty and greatneſs, in giving all things into the hand of Chriſt,

the ſecond Adam, and not tranſacted any more with man, in his own perſon, now when turned rebel to his crown and dignity; but tranſacted immediately with Chriſt, a perſon of equal dignity with himſelf, giving all things to him, and through him to us. Thus we are taught to keep at a due diſtance from this infinitely glorious Sovereign, and to come and receive bleſſings, not immediately out of his hand, but by the hand of Chriſt, the Mediator: "I am the way, no man cometh to the Father but by me."—He hath conſulted the credit of his name, and of all his glorious excellencies; the credit of his broken law, how it might not only be fulfilled, but magnified to the utmoſt; the credit of his offended juſtice, how it might not only be ſatisfied, but glorified to the higheſt. Why, infinite wiſdom knew that there was nothing that the violated law, or the injured attributes of God, could demand for the reparation of their honour, but what the ſinner's Surety, having all things given to him, could anſwer with eaſe, and to infinite ſatisfaction. The Creditor well knew that the Surety was not only creditable, but reſponſible, abundantly able to pay all the debt; mighty to ſave: mighty to ſatisfy, mighty to give all the infinite ſatisfaction demanded; inſomuch, that mercy vents to ſinners, without any prejudice to juſtice; and the attributes of God, ſeemingly inconſiſtent one with another, are reconciled in Chriſt: "Mercy and truth meet together, righteouſneſs and peace kiſs each other." And God pardons and ſatisfies ſo as not only to be merciful, but even juſt, in juſtifying the ungodly.—He hath conſulted the credit of his Son Chriſt Jeſus, who thus is honoured with a name above every name that can be named; all things being given into his hand, not only to furniſh him with his mediatorial ſervice, but alſo to reward him for it, Phil. viii. 9. He is honoured with a goodly train, a throng court of ſupplicants, all things being given unto him, that the gathering of the people might be to him for ſupply, and that the revenue of praiſe might be given to him thro' all eternity.—Yea, he hath conſulted the credit as well as the profit of all the redeemed, by giving all things into the hand of Chriſt. God never *honoured* the church, nor advanced them to greater dig-

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nity, than by giving them an univerſal plenitude, as head of the body the church: and every believer may ſay, "My Head, my Huſband, my Lord, hath all things "in his hand." This is the honour of all the ſaints, they have all things in Chriſt; and he is made of God unto them wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption; yea and all things; that he that glorieth may glory in him. So much for a hint at the beauty of this diſpoſure.

Thirdly, The next thing propoſed was, in order to enlarge and widen our faith in this matter, to ſpeak of the Extent of this ſtore and treaſure that Chriſt hath; the Father having given all things into his hand. Why then, beſides what we ſaid on the doctrinal part, conſider,

1. If all things are in his hand, then all the attributes of God are in him. There is nothing that the Father hath, excepting his perſonality, but the Son hath, as Mediator; "All things that the Father hath are mine," John xvi. 15. All things that God hath, they belong to the Mediator alſo, the God-man. Here then is an ocean where you and I may dive for ever, and never get to the bottom.—Having all things, he hath all the wiſdom of God, Col. ii. 3. "In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge." Poor fooliſh ſinner, who hath no wiſdom, knowledge, nor underſtanding, here is a treaſure for you; "Chriſt, the wiſdom of God, made of God unto you wiſdom," 1 Cor. i. 30.—Having all things, he hath all the power of God; "We preach Chriſt crucified, to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt, the wiſdom of God and the power of God," 1 Cor. i. 24. Poor feeble ſoul, who can do nothing, here is a good bargain for you to lay hold upon; it is he that can work in you, both to will and do; and make his people willing in a day of his power. You are not called to come to Chriſt, but by the power of Chriſt, which is the power of God. You are to receive him that can give you power to receive him; and, as one abſolutely weak, to take hold of his ſtrength, and look to his power, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth.—Having all things, he

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hath all the holineſs of God; he is ſaid to be made of God unto us ſanctification: and ſurely here is an immenſe fountain of ſanctity, the infinite holineſs of God. O poor, vile, polluted ſinner, who hath loſt the image of God, by the fall of the firſt Adam, and the deficiency of his holineſs, here is a better head and huſband for you, in whom is all the fulneſs of the divine holineſs, that you may be complete in him.—Having all things, he hath all the juſtice of God, and all the righteouſneſs of God in him, and juſtice ſatisfied in him, by his mediatorial righteouſneſs; for, "The Lord is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs' ſake;" yea, he that is the righteouſneſs of God, is made unto us righteouſneſs, 1 Cor. i. 30. and, O wonderful word! "He was made *ſin* for us,—that we might be made the *righteouſneſs* of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. O guilty, guilty ſinner! here is a joyful ſound in your ears, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." You may, in Chriſt, be more righteous in God's ſight, than ever you was guilty in his ſight; yea, you may be the very righteouſneſs of God in him. You may not only be juſtified, but find God to be juſt in juſtifying you; becauſe the juſtice of God is in him; and it is ſatisfied in him, magnified in him, glorified in him.—Having all things, he hath all the mercy of God in his hand; all the infinite love, pity, and compaſſion of God is in his hand, and in his heart. What is Chriſt, but the love of God wrapt up in a garment of fleſh and blood? 1 John iv. 9, 10. "In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live thro' him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins." And Jude, ver. 21. "Keep yourſelves in the love of God;" how? "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, unto eternal life." O poor miſerable ſinner! would you wiſh to find mercy in the moment of death, and mercy at the great day? Know that there is no mercy to be expected out of God's hand, unleſs you look to his mercy as in the hand of Chriſt; for, he will never ſhew mercy to the prejudice of his juſtice; and it is only in Chriſt, that *mercy* and juſtice meet together and embrace each other.

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Having all things, he hath all the faithfulneſs and truth of God; "My mercy and my faithfulneſs ſhall be with him," Pſal. lxxxix. 24. I have obſerved between thirty and forty places of ſcripture, where mercy and truth, mercy and faithfulneſs, are joined together; and here you ſee they are joined together in Chriſt. In him the mercy and love of God vents to the honour of divine truth, pledged even in all the threatenings of the law, as well as divine truth, pledged in all the promiſes of the goſpel; becauſe in him all the threatenings and curſes of the law have ſpent their force; "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us," Gal. iii. 13. And, "In him are all the promiſes, Yea and Amen to the glory of God," 2 Cor. i. 20. He is the way and the truth: truth itſelf, the God of truth, and the truth of God. O perfidious, faithleſs, unfaithful, and treacherous ſinner! who hath many times lied to the God of truth; wouldſt thou have thy falſhood all done away, and ſwallowed up in the truth and veracity of God, and your ſalvation ſecured notwithſtanding of your falſhood, fickleneſs, and inſtability? Here is a pillar on which you may ſtand firm and fixed, amidſt all changes, whether in your outward lot or inward frame; for, "All fleſh is graſs; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." The truth of God ſtandeth unalterably the ſame.—Again, having all things, he hath all the authority of God in his hand; "My name is in him," Exod. xxiii. 21. O! poor loſt ſinner, when Chriſt, in this goſpel, comes to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt, ſay not, By what authority doth he theſe things? He is the Sent and Sealed of God, and he hath all the authority that God can give him. And if you aſk by what authority we, poor ſinful mortal worms, like yourſelves, do offer him, and all his ſtore to you? Indeed, we would have no authority, if he had not ſaid, "Go preach the goſpel to every creature; and lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world." In a word, having all things, he hath all the fulneſs of God in his hand; *It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, Col. i. 19. "In him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily."

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Not only all the attributes of God, but all the fulneſs of all the divine attributes. Not only the wiſdom of God, but all the fulneſs of the divine wiſdom; not only the power of God, but all the fulneſs of divine power; not only the holineſs of God, but all the fulneſs of divine holineſs; not only the juſtice and righteouſneſs of God, but all the fulneſs of divine righteouſneſs; not only the mercy of God, but all the fulneſs of divine mercy; not only the truth and faithfulneſs of God, but all the fulneſs of divine faithfulneſs; not only the authority of God, but all the fulneſs of divine authority; not only is God in him, but all the fulneſs of the Godhead. O! poor empty ſinner! here is unſearchable riches, a bottomleſs well of everlaſting ſalvation for you.

2. If all things are in his hand, then all the reins of providence are in his hand; this muſt follow upon what hath been ſaid, having all the perfections of God, ſurely his kingdom ruleth over all. What a vaſt field is here! I ſhall only touch at ſome of the borders thereof. For all things in heaven, earth, and hell are under his government as Mediator, Phil. ii. 10. Eph. i. 22. All the reins of common providence, in the world, and ſpecial providence, in the church, and among the children of God, are wholly in his hand.—Why then, having all things, he hath all kingdoms and churches in his hand; "By me kings reign, and princes decree juſtice," Prov. viii. 15. When he will, he cuts off the ſpirit of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth. Pſal. lxxv. 6, 7. "Promotion cometh neither from the eaſt, nor from the weſt, nor from the ſouth, but God is the judge; he putteth down one and raiſeth up another." It is by him that the churches are planted and watered; and again diſplanted and turned into a barren wilderneſs when he pleaſes, Iſa. xli. 18. Pſal. lvii. 34. Whatever diſorders and confuſions be in the church of God, it is beſt for us to keep about the hand of Chriſt, who hath the over-ruling of all things to his Father's glory, and his people's good.—Having all things, he hath all the ſtars of heaven in his hand, not only the ſun, moon, and ſtars of theſe viſible heavens; for, he could make the ſtars in their courſes fight *againſt Siſera*; but alſo, all the ſtars in the church's firma-

mament, Rev. i. 16. and he orders them to ſhine ſo long in this place, and ſo long in the other as he pleaſes. —Having all things, he hath all the winds of heaven in his hand. When the church and children of God pray, Song iv. 16. *Awake, O north-wind; come thou ſouth,* &c. Whence do they expect theſe winds of the Spirit's influences? Even from him who hath ſaid of the bleſſed Comforter, *I will ſend him unto you*, John xvi. 7. It is he that propheſies unto the winds, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. "Thus ſaith the Lord, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they may live." If there be little of this quickening wind blowing about your hearts, yet he can order the winds to ariſe when he pleaſes; for, all the influences of the Spirit are in his hand, as well as the natural winds, Pſalm cxxxv. 7.— Having all things, he hath all the waters of the ſea, and all the duſt of the earth in his hand; *Who hath meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a ſpan? and comprehended the duſt of the earth in a meaſure?* Iſa. xl. 12. Perhaps you have friends buried in the ſea, or buried in the earth; whether the earth or ſea be their graves, are they friends in Chriſt? Rejoice in the faith of their happy reſurrection; "He will raiſe them up at the laſt day." It is eaſy with him to command the earth and the ſea to give up their dead; for he hath every drop of water, and every pile of duſt within the view of his omniſcient eye, and within the hollow of his omnipotent hand.—Having all things, he hath all the mountains and hills in his hand, as in the forecited, Iſa. xl. 12. He is ſaid to weigh the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance. The mountains and hills are in his hand, both in a literal and metaphorical ſenſe; they are in his hand and under his feet, ſo that it is eaſy with him to caſt them out of the way with his hand, or tread upon them, and come ſkipping on the mountains, and leaping on the hills, Song ii. 8. *Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel, thou ſhalt become a plain*, Zech. iv. 7. How doth faith remove mountains, but by the hand of Chriſt? Poſſibly you may find mountains of ſin and guilt, mountains of trouble and diſtreſs, mountains of fears and objections, mountains of difficulties

culties and diſcouragements in your way; but let them not fright you from coming to Chriſt; for he hath them all in his hand: and he can overturn the mountains as eaſily as he can turn his hand.—Having all things, he hath all weathers in his hand, whether fair or foul, calm or ſtormy weather as he pleaſes to order; whether proſperity or adverſity, plenty or penury: In the day of proſperity be joyful in him; in the day of adverſity conſider that it is he alſo that hath appointed it; for God hath ſet the one againſt the other, Eccl. vii. 14.—Having all things, he hath all times and ſeaſons in his hand: he hath given to the ſtork and ſwallow to know their appointed times, and to obſerve the times of their coming, Jer. viii. 7. O Sirs, how infinitely well then does he know the fit time of his own coming, and the proper ſeaſon of viſiting his people! "He waits to be gracious; and he is a God of judgment, bleſſed are all they that wait for him," Iſa. xxx. 18. The time of our ſojourning here, and the number of our months is in his hand. The time of his approaches to the ſoul, and the time of his ſtaying, is in his ſovereign hand.—Again, having all things in his hand, he hath all the chains of devils and of evil ſpirits in his hand; they are held in his chains, and under his check and controul; they cannot touch a herd of ſwine without his permiſſion; and his hand is famed for caſting out devils; and perhaps, there are many ſuch here to be caſt out; but he hath no more ado but, "Thou dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee to come out." Thou unclean ſpirit, I charge thee to come out: thou drunken ſpirit, I charge thee to come out: thou profane ſpirit, I charge thee to come out. thou atheiſtical unbelieving ſpirit, I charge thee to come out. All the chains wherewith poor priſoners of hope are held, are in his hand; and glory to God that hath anointed him to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound, Iſa. xli. 1.—Again, having all things, he hath all the keys of hell and death in his hand; "I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death," Rev. i. 18. When death and hell thought to have detained *him priſoner*, behold our mighty Samſon came off with

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all the gates, and all the keys in his hand. Why, he had promiſed, ſaying, "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction," Hoſ. xiii. 14. And having done as he ſaid, therefore his people, even ſtaring death in the face, may and ſometimes do, ſing that triumphant ſong, "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," 1 Cor. xv. 55.—Again, having all things, he hath all work upon his hand: having finiſhed the work the Father gave him to do, even the work of redemption, by price; he hath yet upon his hand all the work that the redeemed have to do, even the work of redemption by power. In point of means, you are called to be much about his hand; but in point of power, you muſt put all in his hand; for, "Without him you can do nothing," John xv. 5. It is he who worketh in us, to will and do of his good pleaſure, Phil. iv. 13. It is he that works all our works in us and for us, Iſa. xvi. 12. therefore we ſhould pray, with the pſalmiſt, Pſalm cix. 21. "Do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's ſake; and Pſal. lvii. 2. I will cry unto God, moſt high, unto God that performeth all things for me." But this leads me to another particular.

3. If all things are in Chriſt's hand, then all offices, all ſaving offices are in his hand. You know, the Father hath anointed him to the office of Prophet, Prieſt, and King. O Sirs, what employment will you put in his hand? It is he, as a Prophet, that ſays, "They ſhall be all taught of God:" look to him for the promiſed teaching. It is he, as a Prieſt, that ſays, upon the ground of the ſacrifice he hath offered, "I, even I am he that pardoneth thine iniquity, for my name's ſake:" look to him for remiſſion in his blood. It is he, as a King, that ſays, "I will ſubdue your iniquities;—Sin ſhall not have dominion over you." O! ignorant ſinner, will you find in your heart to refuſe ſuch a Prophet as Chriſt is? Who teaches like him? O! guilty ſinner, will you refuſe ſuch a High-prieſt as this? ſuch a ſacrifice as this? O! enſlaved ſinner, will you refuſe the help of ſuch a King and

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Conqueror as this? If there be none of theſe offices to be diſpenſed with, then take hold of him in them all.

4. If all things are in his hand, then he is clothed with all relations that can contribute to the happineſs of ſinners. What friend or relation do you want, O ſinner?—Want you a father to pity you? Behold, here you may have an everlaſting Father, that is his name, Iſa. ix. 6. and, "In him the fatherleſs findeth mercy." Want you a mother to be tender of you? Behold, here motherleſs children may have their loſs made up; when father and mother leaveth you, he is one to take you up, Pſal. xxvii. 10. He is one that can be a thouſand times better to you than father or mother; and manifeſts more love than the tendereſt mother that ever was; "Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? yea, ſhe may forget, yet will I not forget you," Iſa. xlix. 15.—Want you a huſband? O! what would you think to be married with the heir of all things? Why, if the ear of faith be open, you may hear him ſaying, *Thy Maker is thy Huſband*, Iſa. liv. 5. and again, Hoſ. ii. 19. "I will betroth thee unto me for ever." If you ſay, 'O! how will it be conſiſtent with the juſtice of God for him to marry ſuch a black bride?' Why, he ſays, "I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs;" I will betroth thee unto me in wiſdom; I will betroth thee unto me in judgment, in loving kindneſs; yea, and in faithfulneſs; and thou ſhalt know the Lord; thou ſhalt know God in Chriſt. How can he betroth thee to himſelf, and yet be infinitely juſt, and wiſe, and merciful, and faithful in doing ſo? Becauſe mercy and truth have met together in Chriſt, the glorious Bridegroom; they ſtruck up a match together, and embraced each other, that there might be nothing to hinder the match between Chriſt and you.—Want you a proper match then, O ſinner, or a meet help, poor bankrupt, run in ſuch deep arrears to the law and juſtice of God? Is not he that hath unſearchable riches a fit match for you? Poor dying creature, that will be food for worms in a little, here is a living Head for you, that can make you live for ever. O! mortal worm, here is *an immortal* Huſband for you. Poor changeable creature,

ture, here is an unchangeable match for you; "Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever." Want you a lover? are you an outcaſt, that reckons yourſelf deſpiſed by all the world, in ſo much, that none cares for you, or loves you? Behold, an infinitely loving and lovely Jeſus, offering and boding his love upon you, ſaying, "I will heal your backſlidings; I will love you freely," Hoſ. xiv. 4. And he is ſeeking your heart, your conjugal love, ſaying, "My ſon, give me thy heart."—Want you a leader thro' the dark and difficult ſteps of your way? A guide, a director, and counſellor in whatſoever affair you have upon your hand, wherein it is needful to be directed? O! here is a wonderful Counſellor, who ſays, Iſa. xlii. 16. "I will lead the blind in a way they know not, and in paths that they have not known."—Want you a ſhepherd to feed you, or a captain to fight your battles for you?—Want you a phyſician, when in ſickneſs, to heal you?—Want you a refiner and purifier, when you are in the furnace, to purge away your droſs? Behold he who hath all things in his hand, has all the relations that you can deſire.

5. If all things be in his hand, then all graces are in his hand. This is a great part of the glory of the only begotten of the Father, that he is full of grace and truth, and, "Out of his fulneſs have all we received and grace for grace, John i. 14. 16. Grace is poured into his lips," Pſal. xlv. 2. and I hope he is pouring grace from his lips by his word among ſome of you this day. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon him, for he hath anointed him." He is anointed with the oil of gladneſs, anointed with the Spirit of all grace.—Want you grace to believe? Behold it is in his hand, as he is the Author of faith.—— Want you grace to repent? Behold it is in his hand, as a Prince and Saviour exalted to give repentance.—Do you want grace to pray? It is he that has the Spirit of prayer in his hand to give, Zech. xii. 10.—Do you want grace to communicate? Grace to mortify ſin? Grace to bear the croſs? Grace to reſiſt temptation? Grace to do and ſuffer? It is he that has all grace in his hand to give; and who ſays, "My grace ſhall be ſufficient for you:"

hence his people are called to be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

6. If all things are in his hand, then all bleſſings are in his hand to give. He is the Lord-diſpenſer of temporal bleſſings; for, "The earth is in his hand, and the fulneſs thereof:" the Lord-diſpenſer of ſpiritual bleſſings; for, behold heaven is in his hand, and the fulneſs thereof: the Lord-diſpenſer of eternal bleſſings; for, eternal life is in his hand. It was promiſed of him, that men ſhould be bleſſed in him; and accordingly he is ſent to bleſs us, Acts iii. 26. "God having raiſed up his Son, Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." I might here enumerate many particular bleſſings. The bleſſings of illumination is in his hand; for, he is a Light to enlighten the Gentiles. The bleſſing of converſion is in his hand; for, he ſays, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." The bleſſing of juſtification is in his hand; for, "We are juſtified freely by his grace." The bleſſing of reconciliation with God is in his hand; for, it is he that maketh peace by the blood of his croſs. The bleſſing of ſanctification is in his hand; for, "He is made of God unto us, ſanctification." The bleſſing of acceptance is in his hand; for, "By him we have boldneſs and acceſs, with confidence, thro' the faith of him." The bleſſing of conſolation is in his hand; for, he is the Conſolation of Iſrael. The bleſſing of a happy death is in his hand; for, "Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord." The bleſſing of a happy reſurrection is in his hand; for, He is the reſurrection and the life. The bleſſing of a happy ſentence at the great day is in his hand; for, All judgment is committed to him; and it is he that will ſay to the wicked, "Depart ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" and to the righteous, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world." The bleſſing of eternal glorification is in his hand; for, as he is the glory of the higher houſe, ſo he ſays, "Father, I will, that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory: and ſo ſhall they be ever with *the Lord.*"—Can you tell me any ſpiritual bleſſing that is

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not in his hand? No: Eph. i. 3. "Who hath bleſſed us with *all* ſpiritual bleſſings, in heavenly places, only in Chriſt."

And now, after all, what think ye of him? Have you no heart to join hand with a well-furniſhed Saviour, that hath all things in his hand? If you have got no heart to ſuch a good bargain, this is very ſad; but, becauſe it is a day of glad tidings, I will tell you among other things, that all hearts are in his hand, and it is his prerogative to open the locked heart. It is eaſy with him to create a clean heart, to melt the hard heart, to fix the wandering heart, to cleanſe the filthy heart, to elevate the drooping heart, to conquer the ſtubborn heart, to quicken the dead heart, to draw the backward heart, as I noticed on another ſubject; and if any thing draw your heart to him, it will be the revelation of his grace and fulneſs, as having all things in his hand.—Thus much may ſuffice for a comprehenſive view of the extent of this treaſure.

Fourthly, I come to the fourth thing I propoſed, which was, in order to the further aſſiſting of faith, to conſider the manner how all things are in Chriſt's hand. I have already told you, all things are in Chriſt's hand naturally as he is God; and donatively, as he is Mediator: but, beſides, there are theſe following ways wherein all things given him of his Father are in his hand.

1. All things are in his hand ſubſtantially; not ſymbolically, as Chriſt is ſaid to be in the elements of bread and wine in the ſacrament; or, as God was ſaid to be in the temple, by the ſymbol of his preſence. It is not the ſhadow of all things, but the ſubſtance, which is in his hand; therefore it is ſaid, Col. ii. 9. "In him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily;" that is, ſubſtantially, and ſo in a glorious, eminent, ſuperlative and tranſcendent way. Chriſt is the ſubſtantial All of his people; the ſubſtance of all the types, and ſacrifices, and ceremonies under the law. They were but the ſhadow of good things to come, Heb. x. 1. All the good things themſelves are in Chriſt ſubſtantially.

2. All things are in him communicatively; his Mediatorial fulneſs is communicable and omnipotent. All

ſhops are cloſed, but Chriſt's houſe ſtands open; and on it this inſcription, Whoſoever will, may come and ſhare of this treaſure. Chriſt's fulneſs is communicable; and therefore, Out of this fulneſs we may all receive, and grace for grace, John i. 16. We needed not preach of this ſtore that is in Chriſt's hand, if it was locked up in him. Why is it, that in him, as Mediator, dwells all fulneſs of the Godhead bodily? Why, but that we may be complete in him, Col. ii. 9, 10. Chriſt is a cabinet of rich jewels; faith is a key to open the cabinet: we receive out of his fulneſs by faith. Prayer is a key, "If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk it of God." If theſe keys be not in your hand, ſurely they are in his, who hath all things in his hand. O ſolicite him to caſt you the key, and give you the ſpirit of faith and prayer.

3. All things are in his hand ſufficiently; there is bread enough and to ſpare, Luke xv. 17. Fulneſs enough for the deſtitute; light enough for the dark; life enough for the dead: there is grace enough in him, pardon enough in him, help enough in him; bread enough and to ſpare. If you think there is none to ſpare for you, it is becauſe you do not believe there is enough in him; but will you diſgrace our infinitely noble and glorious Lord, by ſuppoſing that there is not enough in him? O! He can ſatisfy the longing ſoul, and fill the hungry ſoul with good things. Nothing in this world gives ſatisfaction to the ſoul: he was a fool that ſaid, when he had a full barn, "Soul, take thy reſt, thou haſt goods laid up for many years." We may as well dream of a coffer full of grace and glory, as of a ſoul full of corn and wine; it is only Chriſt that has in him ſuitable and ſatisfying fulneſs for the ſoul, and enough to give complete, ſolid, permanent, and everlaſting ſatisfaction.

4. All things are in his hand efficiently and effectively, in ſo much, that he can make others to ſhare of a conformity to him, in that ſtore that is in his hand. For example, hath he all comelineſs? Well, what ſays he? "I have made thee perfect thro' my comelineſs which I put upon thee," Ezek. xvi. 14. Hath he all *righteouſneſs?* Well, the believer is made righteous through his *righteouſneſs.* Hath he all glory? The believer is made glorious

glorious thro' his glory, and all glorious within; "Beholding his glory, we are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.—There is a power and efficacy in every ſaving diſcovery of the glorious treaſure that is in Chriſt, a ſmiling favour in his face; and, O happy they, that are ſmitten with a conformity to him: who, beholding the glory of his grace, are made gracious; beholding the glory of his holineſs, are made holy; beholding the glory of his mercy, are made merciful.

5. All things are in his hand unchangeably; for he is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 18. He is always the ſame; and his ſtock and treaſure is invariably the ſame. Whatever you get out of his hand, yet ſtill the ſtock and ſtore is in his hand. Let faith draw never ſo many bills upon him, for this and that ſupply, at this time and the other time, and get never ſo much rent, annual rent, or daily rent, out of the ſtock; yet ſtill the ſtock and intereſt both are in his hand: and the believer hath his all to the fore; even when all that was in your hand is ſpent, yet all things remain as they were in Chriſt's hand; yea, and this well of ſalvation ſprings up for ever, and that to everlaſting life. O great encouragement! the fulneſs of Chriſt, as it is in our hand may ebb and flow; but as it is in Chriſt's hand, it is unchangeably the ſame. The believer may be ſometimes full, and ſometimes empty; ſometimes up, and ſometimes down; but Chriſt is always the ſame; "I am the Lord, I change not." All believers, ſince the beginning of the world, have been always putting down their buckets of faith, and drawing water out of this well of ſalvation; yet ſtill it is full and running over; and no wonder, for his fulneſs is infinite; it is the fulneſs of God.

6. All things are in his hand eternally, Col. i. 19. "It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell;" it is a dwelling fulneſs. In him it is, and in him it dwells for ever. "In him are durable riches and righteouſneſs; and at his right-hand are pleaſures for evermore." Hence alſo the bleſſings he communicates are everlaſting; everlaſting peace, everlaſting pardon, everlaſting conſolation,

everlaſting life; "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life." Here is a depth to dive into for ever; Chriſt hath an eternity of all perfection in him. An eternity of all excellency, an eternity of all bleſſings: here is a portion that will make you up to eternity. Here is eternal wiſdom, eternal power, eternal holineſs, eternal happineſs. He is the true God, and eternal life. Every thing is everlaſting in him; his righteouſneſs is everlaſting righteouſneſs; his ſtrength is everlaſting ſtrength; his wiſdom is everlaſting wiſdom. Poor dying mortal, here is an everlaſting treaſure. O! come here, come here, poor mortal, that art to die in a few days; and no matter tho' you give up the ghoſt ſhortly, when, inſtead of this ſhort laſting life, here is everlaſting life for you, as well as ſecurity from everlaſting death. All things are in his hand eternally.—But I ſhall go on,

Fifthly, To the next thing I propoſed, which was, in order to the quickening and exciting of our faith, to offer ſome motives and conſiderations, ariſing from, and accompanying this truth, that all things are given into Chriſt's hand. O let us be exhorted to come to, and cloſe with, and believe in, this glorious One. And, for motive, conſider,

1. Is it poſſible that we can have or deſire a better pattern to follow or imitate, in truſting in Chriſt, than his eternal Father, who hath entruſted him with all things? "Behold my Servant whom I uphold!" Iſaiah xlii. 1.; or, as the word is obſerved to ſignify, "My Servant whom I truſt;" and accordingly hath entruſted him with all things. And, Oh! may not this ſhame us out of our diſtruſt? Thus the Father entruſted him with all the great concerns of his everlaſting glory! And may not we well truſt him with all the concerns of our everlaſting welfare? O Sirs, is it not ſafeſt laying our help where God has laid it? Where the waters go, the fiſh will go; God and all his fulneſs is gone with Chriſt. Is it not beſt going where God goes, and reſting where he reſts, and loving whom he loves, and truſting whom he truſts.

2. Conſider, is it poſſible that we can have or deſire

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a better hand for all things to be put into, than the hand of Chriſt, whom the Father thus loves? All things you need to make you for ever happy, are in the hand of a God-man. That your ſtock may be ſure to you, it is in the hand of a God; and that it may be near to you, it is in the hand of a Man. How can it be ſurer to you than in his hand, who is God as well as man? How can it be nearer to you than in his hand, who is man as well as God? O then, is not the ſtock in a friend's hand? A great friend, a near friend? God could not chuſe a better hand both for his own intereſt and yours. It is more honourable for God, more profitable for you, that all things are put in the hand of Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, the new-covenant head, than if all things had remained in the ſtate they were in before. The covenant of works was broken: but if you look believingly towards Chriſt, not only will God get more glory this way than if he ſhould damn you for your ſins, and ſatisfy his juſtice upon you to eternity; but alſo more glory than if he ſhould have rewarded you with life, for your righteouſneſs, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, ſuppoſing it had never been broken. Why, all the glory of God was deſigned to concentre in Chriſt, as in a bright conſtellation; and will you croſs this deſign, that tends ſo much more to God's honour, and your profit, than if matters had ſtood in their old primitive poſture? See how Job was taken up with the way of grace, beyond that of works, Job ix. 15. 20, 21. "Whom, tho' I were righteous, yet would I not anſwer; but I would make ſupplication to my Judge. If I juſtify myſelf, mine own mouth ſhall condemn me; if I ſay, I am perfect, it ſhall alſo prove me perverſe. Tho' I were perfect, yet would I not know my ſoul, I would deſpiſe my life."

3. Conſider, as another motive, that as it is not poſſible to miſs everlaſting life, if you look believingly to him that hath all things in his hand; ſo it is not poſſible to eſcape everlaſting wrath, if you believe not in him; read the verſe immediately following the text; "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved,

but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned." He that believeth, cannot miſs ſalvation; for, it is in the hand of Chriſt, to give to all comers; he that believeth not, cannot eſcape damnation; for, "How ſhall we eſcape, if we reject ſo great a ſalvation?" ſo great a Saviour, who hath all things in his hand? It is eſtabliſhed in heaven, and it ſtands now upon the honour of God to ſave all believers in Chriſt, and to damn all unbelievers. Only, as God gets more honour, and greater ſatisfaction in your ſalvation, through Chriſt, in a way of believing in him, than he can get in your damnation, if you remain in your unbelief; therefore, though you had no regard to your ſalvation or damnation, there is ſomething here, of infinitely greater worth than your eternal life, or eternal damnation, that ſhould move you to this glorious Jeſus for all things; and that is, for the ſake of the eternal honour and glory of God and Chriſt; for, the Father hath put honour upon the Son, by giving all things into his hand. As you cannot put more honour upon Chriſt, ſo you cannot put more honour upon his Father that crowned him with this honour, than by putting all things you have ado in his hand, and coming to him for all things you ſtand in need of. Chriſt is glorified in ſuch; for, they are his glory; yea, his crown of glory, Iſa. lxii. 3. When you come to him and make uſe of this treaſure that the Father hath put in his hand, you join with his Father in putting a crown of glory on his head.

4. Conſider, for motive to look to this Jeſus, that it is not poſſible, O ſinner, that all things are given into Chriſt's hand, and yet you have no concern in it, ſince all is given to him that he may give it out to you. Why has he received the Spirit above meaſure? He tells you himſelf, Iſa. lxi. 1. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me:" Why, even to preach good tidings to the meek and to proclaim liberty to the captives. His Father alſo tells you, Iſa. xlii. 1. "I have put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles;" that is, give light and underſtanding, life and ſalvation to the Gentiles. Why hath our Lord Jeſus *received gifts,* even the gift of all things? See Pſal. lxviii. 18.

18. compared with Eph. iv. 8. "He hath received gifts for men." But, ſay you, I am a poor rebel. Well, it is even for the rebellious. So, not only are all things in Chriſt's hand communicatively, as I ſaid before, but all things are given him for this very end, that they may be communicated for the benefit of ſinners. When Chriſt ſays, Mat. xxviii. 10. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth," he immediately adds, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations:" As if he had ſaid, Why have I received all power in heaven and in earth, but for this end, that I may be able to ſave and relieve poor ſinners, and therefore, "Go ye, and teach all nations," and tell them where their help lies. Say not, then, you have no concern, O ſinner; it is becauſe the Father hath given all things into his hand, that therefore he ſays to us, in your behalf, "Go preach the goſpel to every creature;" every ſinner, though they have ſinned themſelves into monſters; ſinned themſelves into devils; yet, if they be creatures, preach the goſpel to them: tell them I have life, and ſalvation, and all things in my hand for them; "Whoſoever will, let him come." Put not away this grace of God from you thro' unbelief, ſaying, It cannot be for me: yea, it is for you; "To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent." Let faith ſay, It is for me, for me, that all things were given into Chriſt's hand. No, ſays unbelief, and the devil together, it is for the elect and not for me. O ſinner, let not the devil cheat you about the object of faith; tho' indeed, "The election only ſhall obtain;" yet the thing you are called firſt to believe, is not what is for you in the purpoſe of God, but what is for you in the promiſe of God, and in the offer of this goſpel; and if you take what is for you here, you are ſafe in ſpite of all the devils of hell. Therefore let your heart ſay, 'O! here is life and ſalvation, and all 'things in Chriſt's hand held out in this goſpel for me; 'and even ſo I take it as offered to me.' If it were not for you, we could not preach the goſpel to every one here; but, in his great name, I preach it to every creature that hears me, that the Father hath given all things into Chriſt's hand for you; and, therefore, take him to you, and all things with him.

5. Con-

5. Conſider, that Chriſt, having got all things put in his hand, for the behoof of ſinners, it is not poſſible that he will keep all cloſe in his hand, and give out nothing. No, no; it ſtands upon his honour as Mediator; it ſtands upon his credit as he is the church's treaſurer, and the Father's truſtee, to give out of that treaſure of grace and fulneſs, that is given to him, for our behalf: he would not be faithful unto his truſt if he ſhould give out none of that treaſure to poor ſinners; but, who can charge him with unfaithfulneſs? What mouth, but that of curſed unbelief, will charge him thus? When unbelief ſays, Oh! he will give out nothing to me: What is the meaning of it? It is in effect a ſaying, He is not ſo faithful to his truſt, as that I can expect he will give out any thing to the like of me. Alas! beware of blaſphemy: let faith rather ſtep in and ſay, I hope he will give out of his fulneſs to me, becauſe his name is *Faithful and true.* And if you can believe his truth and faithfulneſs pledged in the promiſe, as the Father's Truſtee for ſinners, and that with particular application to yourſelf, then his faithfulneſs is engaged unto you, believer, in particular. But here is a door of faith and hope even for ſinners that are yet unbelievers, that there is a glorious and ſweet neceſſity lying upon Chriſt, to give out of his grace and fulneſs to ſinners of mankind; and why not to you? He muſt give out of his grace to make his people willing in a day of his power, and bring them to himſelf; "Other ſheep I have which are not of this fold, [namely, Gentiles as well as Jews,] them I muſt bring; and they ſhall hear my voice," John x. 16. We are told, John iv. 4. "He muſt needs go through Samaria:" why, for what end? It was even to give out of his grace to a poor harlot, a vile ſinful woman there: Even ſo, I hope he muſt needs go through Dunfermline, this day, to give out of that ſtore the Father hath given him, for the ſake of poor vile ſinners here. Was there a bleſſed neceſſity for his ſuffering at Jeruſalem? Yea, there was; Luke xxiv. 26. "Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?" Even ſo, there is a bleſſed neceſſity for his *applying the* virtue of his death and ſufferings, by pouring

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out of his Spirit, and communicating of his grace for that end.

6. Conſider, that tho' Chriſt be exalted to this honour and majeſty, of having all things given into his hand, yet it is not poſſible that therefore he ſhould be proud, and lordly, and diſdainful, ſo as not to regard the caſe of poor ſinners; for, the quite contrary is the truth, namely, becauſe he is thus honoured, therefore he humbles himſelf. Some may think, 'Oh! when Chriſt is exalted 'to ſuch ſupreme dignity, as that all things are in his 'hand, ſurely he will reckon it below him to regard ſuch 'a ſinner as I am; and ſtoop ſo low as to waſh ſuch a 'leper as I am.' Alas! Sirs, think not ſo; for he declares the contrary; read his mind on this with wonder and admiration, John xiii. 3,—8. "Jeſus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riſeth from ſupper, and laid aſide his garments, and took a towel and girded himſelf: After that he poured water into a baſon, and began to waſh his diſciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What I do thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter. Peter ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me." What was the reaſon, then, that Chriſt ſtooped down to waſh his diſciples feet? Even becauſe he knew the Father had given all things into his hand. Was he therefore proud? No; he was therefore humble. Poor ſinful men, that have nothing, are moſt proud; but the God-man, who hath all things, is moſt humble, and ſtoops to our infirmities, becauſe he is clothed with infinite excellency. His excellency as Mediator, is the cauſe of his humility; and his humility prompts his excellency to be good to ſinners. O wonderful, humble Saviour! There is a twofold humiliation of Chriſt; *Firſt*, He humbled himſelf to come down into our nature, and ſhed his blood for us. *Secondly*, Being exalted, he humbles himſelf to come

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down into our hearts, our filthy hearts, and waſh them in his blood. In the former, he humbled himſelf, that God might exalt him; in the latter, God exalts him that he might humble himſelf. He is exalted for this very end to pardon and purge guilty and polluted ſinners, Acts v. 31. It is no diſparagement to his exalted ſtate, for him to ſtoop down and waſh your feet, and waſh your heart: "Him hath God exalted, a Prine and Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael, and remiſſion of ſins:" This is the way he waſhes, by giving pardon and repentance. For as high and honourable as he is, he thinks it his honour to give out grace. Wo is me, that he is not employed, ſince he thinks it his honour to waſh you! It is not below him; he does not think he will be diſhonoured or affronted, no: he knows that the lower he ſtoops, the higher will he be honoured in the hearts of his people. I appeal to all believing hearts; the lower that he condeſcends to you, to waſh your filthy hearts, O! did not your hearts exalt him the more, and wonder at his glory? Do you think the leſs of him? I ſuppoſe not. I am ſure you think the more, and the higher of him. O! ſinner, then, do not think he is too high to look down towards you; the higher he is, the lower doth he ſtoop; and therefore the higher you conceive he is, the more hope you may conceive of his pity and favour towards you; and the more you ſee is given into his hand, the more do you expect to get out of his hand; faith has the more footing.—— So much for the motives.

Sixthly, The next thing propoſed, in order to the regulating and ſquaring of our faith, according to the goſpel-rule, was to offer ſome Directions. And,

1. Be convinced, that, as all things are in his hand, ſo faith itſelf is in his hand to give; for he is the author of it, Heb. xii. 2. And know, that nothing, but the power of God, can effectually work faith. The goſpel muſt come, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, 1 Theſ. i. 5. Seek not for faith, then, out of your own bowels; for, *Faith cometh by hearing; Why, the* goſpel that you hear, is the power of God to ſalva-

ſalvation; and this power works ſecretly and ſilently upon the heart, in hearing, when the perſon may be little knowing that it is the power of God that is dealing with his heart; and yet that power is, perhaps, working ſo effectually, that, in hearing of Chriſt, there is a heart-beating towards him: a heart-bleeding towards him; a heart-burſting towards him; a heart-burning towards him. This power is ſometimes an enlightening power, raviſhing the heart with the glorious excellency of Chriſt, diſcovered in the word; and, with this, a ſoftening power, ſo as the heart is melted like water, before the Lord, that was a hard rock before; and, perhaps, with this a drawing power, ſo as the heart is panting after the Lord; and yet, perhaps, the perſon doth not know that the power of God is preſent; but however, the goſpel is the power of God; and faith comes by hearing of it, when it comes not in word only, but in power. Faith comes not by working; it comes not by doing; it comes not by forcing yourſelf up to the act of faith; but it comes by hearing the object; it comes by hearing of Chriſt, and of what he hath in his hand. The object of faith comes not from our act of faith; but the acting of faith comes from the object of faith; and ſo it comes by hearing of the glorious object. Why ſtand you poring then upon your want of power to act faith, as if you were to pull it out of your own breaſt? You will be much nearer your purpoſe, if you will pore upon the object of it, Chriſt, who hath all things in his hand. If you be taken up with the object, there is no fear about the act of faith; for the ſoul, in believing, conſiders not what can I do? But, what can Chriſt do? It conſiders not, what have I in my hand? But, what hath Chriſt in his hand? And hence, when faith acts rightly upon Chriſt, it conſiders not itſelf, and its own actings; it is taken up with nothing but Chriſt: and it is the beſt act of faith that loſes itſelf, and is ſwallowed up in its object, ſaying, "Chriſt is all in all;" and I ſee all things in his hand.

2. Direction, in order to your cloſing with Chriſt, who hath all things in his hand; O! be convinced that you have nothing in your own hand; no righteouſneſs in

your

your own hand, no ſtrength in your own hand; this would pave the way for ſaying, "Surely in the Lord only, have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength." I fear there are ſome here, who are rich and increaſed with goods, and are relying on ſome of theſe good things that they have in hand; even believers are in danger here; ſome are ſaying, in their hearts, Perhaps I have ſome good duty and preparation-work I have been about, and I reſt on that; and hope for favour on that account: I had a good frame yeſterday, or yeſternight, or this morning; and I got grace to pray, and I am hoping, on that account, to obtain favour at God's hand this day. O man, take care of your hand; while you are relying on any thing in your own hand, you are too rich, and it will be a wonder if you meet not with a diſappointment; for he that feeds the hungry with good things, ſends the rich empty away. There is more hope, if notwithſtanding all your beſt duties, and beſt frames, you are entitled to nothing, and ſee you have no wiſdom, no grace, no good thing in your own hand; no good frame to confide in. What! have you nothing at all? No, not a crumb to put in your mouth? Are you reduced to poverty and beggary? Why, then, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit;* come, and welcome, to a full Jeſus, who has all things in his hand. The poor and needy come beſt ſpeed here. Have you nothing to truſt unto but the grace that is in his hand? the fulneſs that is in his hand? and have you no hope or confidence built any where elſe? I can promiſe in his name, it ſhall not be long ere you be ſupplied; for, "The needy ſhall not always be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor periſh for ever."

3. Direction I offer is, O man, woman, lay all things that you want diſtinctly and directly overagainſt all things he hath, and you want out of his hand. For example, when you think on your own guiltineſs, then look to his righteouſneſs, and lay this over againſt that. When you apprehend your weakneſs, then apprehend the ſtrength that is in his hand, and lay the one over againſt the other. When you conſider your emptineſs, then conſider his fulneſs, and ſtudy Chriſt, and your condition together; if you ſtudy your condition without ſtudying

dying Chriſt, then you will be full of deſpair and diſcouragements; if you ſtudy Chriſt, without ſtudying your condition, then you will be full of pride and preſumption. If you think on ſin, without Chriſt, you deſpair; if you think on Chriſt, without thinking on ſin, you preſume. If you be ignorant, think on Chriſt as a Prophet; if guilty, here think on Chriſt as a Prieſt; if enſlaved, apprehend him as a King. Obſerve the attributes and titles of Chriſt that are moſt ſuited to your condition; and lay them and your condition together. It is remarkable, that all the epiſtles to the ſeven churches of Aſia, begin with titles of Chriſt; and every title is ſuited to the condition of that church. For example, his title to the church of Smyrna is, "The firſt and the laſt, that was dead and is alive," Rev. ii. 8. Why ſo? Becauſe they were to ſuffer hard things, and were called to be faithful unto the death, and ſo on; he ſhews that he hath a title ſuited to every caſe. Thus, ſet the names and titles of Chriſt, that ſuit your condition, directly over againſt it; and aſſure yourſelf that Chriſt will make good his titles, that he is clothed with. If the title be, "The Lord is my ſhepherd;" then I may certainly infer, "I ſhall not want," Pſalm xxiii. 1. Thus do you, when you find there is diſtreſs among the ſaints, then remember his title, "King of ſaints." When you find diſorder and commotion among the nations, then remember his title, "The king of nations." When you find darkneſs overſpreading your ſoul, then remember his title, "I am the light of the world." When you find death and deadneſs taking place, then remember his title, "I am the reſurrection and the life." When you are uneaſy with the confuſions and black aſpect of affairs in the church, then remember his title, 'The Head of the body the church;' and Head over all things to it: "The government is upon his ſhoulders." Know, that as Chriſt and the promiſe is yours, in the goſpel-offer and publication to be believed in, reſted upon; ſo Chriſt is ſo far yours in poſſeſſion, as you, thro' grace, improve and reſt upon him. The promiſe is ſo far yours in poſſeſſion as you improve it, and reſt upon it.

4. Direction I offer is, ſince the Father hath given all things

things into his hand, then, O let him be improven and employed by you for all things. Do not think you can put too much work in his hand, or that you can give him too many things ado for you. If you believe the Father hath given all things into his hand, you may be ſure you are welcome to employ him in all things: and the more buſineſs you have to put in his hand, the more welcome. You may come to him not only with all your ſpiritual affairs, and truſt him for all things that concern wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; but alſo with all your temporal affairs; for the promiſe, in Chriſt, is a promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; 1 Tim. iv. 8. Many profeſs to rely on Chriſt for eternal ſalvation, and yet they dare not truſt unto him for their temporal proviſion; and ſo diſcover the rottenneſs of their faith, in that they cannot depend on him for all things. It is ſaid, 1 John iv. 20. "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?" So may we ſay, He that cannot truſt in Chriſt for things temporal, in this world; how can he truſt in him for things eternal, in the other world? Why then, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy ſteps." You may go to his table with an eye to him for his conduct and bleſſing, even in temporal affairs: and if you can truſt him in theſe, it will be a good evidence that you can truſt him, indeed, in the affairs of your eternal ſalvation alſo. Is there any remarkable change of circumſtances in your life and lot in this world, wherein you would have his conduct and countenance? Are you a miniſter? and would you be a bleſſing to the pariſh where God is ordering your lot? Are you a private Chriſtian? and would you be a bleſſing to the place or family wherein God may appoint your lot? Why, behold he hath the bleſſing of Abraham to beſtow upon you; "I will bleſs thee, and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing," Gen. xii. 2. If you own that the reins of providence are in his hand, as well as all things elſe, then come to him, and employ him in all things that pertain to life and godlineſs both.

5. Direction is, ſince the Father hath given all things *into Chriſt's* hand, then, in coming to him, not only come

come that he may *give* all things to you, that you need, but that he may *be* all things to you that you want. Not only that he may give you life, but that he himſelf may be your life; not only that he may give you ſalvation, but that he himſelf may be your ſalvation; not only that he may bring you to reſt and happineſs, but that he himſelf may be your reſt and happineſs, both by the way here, and at the end of the way hereafter. Look to Chriſt, not only to give you all, but to be your all; for he is not only the way to life, but the life itſelf: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "As I deſire, "ſays one, never to be happy, if Chriſt be not able to "bring me to happineſs; ſo I deſire no greater, no bet-"ter happineſs, than what Chriſt is, and can be to me." O Sirs, he is all, and there is all in him; all to juſtify, all to ſanctify, all to glorify, all to fill and ſatisfy, all to delight and ſolace the largeſt faculties of the immortal ſoul; "In his preſence there is fulneſs of joy." The higheſt happineſs here is, "Chriſt in us the hope of glory;" and the higheſt happineſs hereafter is, Chriſt, even to be for ever with the Lord. The thief on the croſs had this preached to him, "This day ſhalt thou be with *me* in Paradiſe:" to be in Paradiſe, is not happineſs; to be with angels there, is not happineſs; but to be with Chriſt there, this is heaven and happineſs. The more diſtinct that faith is in chooſing Chriſt to be the ſupreme reſt, the more complete is that faith. The language of faith comes to maturity; 'O! ſince God and all his ful-'neſs is in Chriſt: it is Chriſt alone that is my life, all 'my ſalvation, all my hope, all my righteouſneſs, all 'my ſtrength, all my comfort, all my confidence, all my 'happineſs, and all my heaven: "Whom have I in hea-"ven but thee? and there is none in all the earth whom "I deſire beſides thee."

6. Direction for regulating faith is, ſince all things are given into his hand, and are unchangeably and eternally in his hand, then let coming to him, thro' grace, be your continual exercife, your daily trade; the fountain is ever full and overflowing; and the oftener you come with your empty veſſels, ſo much the better. Think not faith lies in one ſingle act; if you would be

very ſure of Chriſt, you ſhould believe in him, and embrace him every day; yea, and as oft as, through grace, you can, every day. Having once come to Chriſt, your life ſhould be a life of coming cloſely and conſtantly to him, 1 Pet. ii. 4. It is not only to be acted at the table of the Lord, when you ſit there; it may be acted, perhaps, as profitably and pleaſantly before you go to the table, or afterwards, in hearing, or ſinging, in public or in ſecret; and, as the ſecond edition corrects the errors of the firſt, ſo after-acts of believing, many times correct the defects of the firſt act. We are told, John v. 13. "The man that was healed, wiſt not who it was that healed him;" and the man cured of his blindneſs, John ix. 36. knew not who he was, till the Lord met with him again: and, indeed, the longer a man hath Chriſt's company, the longer and ſweeter are his manifeſtations of himſelf: every day's renewing of our application to Chriſt by faith, and cloſing with him, would make every day to be a day of eſpouſals; and every day of eſpouſals would be a day of the gladneſs of his heart, and of yours too. I think there is ground for this in that promiſe, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever," Hoſ. ii. 19. What is that? I ſuppoſe we may take this view of it, not only ſhall the marriage-relation be indiſſolvable; but alſo the marriage-ſolemnity ſhall be perpetual; I will be for ever betrothing thee unto me; the manifeſtations of my love ſhall never fade, never languiſh, but be always freſh and full, like that of the day of eſpouſals; and every new manifeſtation thereof like a new eſpouſals.——So much for directions in this matter.

Now, my friends, to come to a cloſe, may I aſk, What entertainment have you given to the Son of God, who hath all things given into his hand? Or, what room hath he made for himſelf into your heart? If you ſhould hear of a ſovereign water that could cure all diſeaſes, what flocking of people would there be to that water? Here is that ſovereign water, Chriſt alone, that can cure all diſeaſes, yea and ſupply all wants; and he is the great ordinance of God, the great inſtitution and appointment of the Father for the relief of ſinners, in all caſes, "Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat

which

which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you," John vi. 27. There is the hand from which you may have it. But how ſhall I get it from him? Why, it follows, "Him hath God the Father ſealed;" Him hath God the Father appointed. He is the great ordinance and appointment of the Father for the very things you want: "God hath ſet him forth to be a propitiation;" ſet him forth to be a righteouſneſs for guilty ſinners; ſet him forth to be a robe for naked ſinners; ſet him forth to be a laver for filthy ſinners; ſet him forth to be a ladder between heaven and earth, that ſinners may get up to the everlaſting enjoyment of God. He hath ſet him forth to be all things; to be wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, redemption, and all things for us; and this in infinite love to him and us: "The Father loves him, and hath given all things into his hand." Why, ſay you, but I cannot ſee his hand with all things in it. Why, man, by this goſpel which you hear, he is reaching down his hand with all things in it, that you may take hold of it in this word of grace. Will you tell me, what way would you have the inviſible God to put out his hand towards you? Infinite wiſdom has thought this the beſt way; and if you be not ſo groſly ignorant as to think of ſeeing the infinite inviſible God, with bodily eyes, what better way can you conceive for him to ſtretch out his arm, and reach out his hand to you? Would you have him ſpeaking to you by ſome glorious angel of heaven? Why, this way hath been tried, and their appearance was terrifying. Would you have him putting out his hand in a flame of fire? Why, this was once done to Moſes in the buſh; but the poor man fell a-quaking. Or again, would you have God putting out his hand, or uttering his voice to you by thunder and lightening, and thick clouds, and darkneſs? Why, this was the way he took at mount Sinai, and all the camp of Iſrael fell a-trembling and crying, 'O! let not 'God ſpeak, but Moſes; if he will ſpeak to us, let him 'do it by a man like ourſelves:' and, O Sirs, if you knew God, this is juſt the very way you would have him ſpeaking to you; and behold it is juſt by a poor mortal worm like yourſelves, that you may not be frighten-

ed at his words. It is true, it may be, the devil and the world have been buſy, to fill your hearts with prejudices againſt the poor feeble inſtruments, who preach this goſpel to you; but whatever you think of us, and, for Chriſt's ſake, I beg you reckon no more of us than of poor earthen veſſels, bearing a treaſure to you; only, never let the view of the baſeneſs and inſignificancy of the veſſel make you to deſpiſe and reject the treaſure we are bearing to you; a treaſure worth ten thouſand, thouſand, thouſand worlds; and wo is me, if you be only ſtaring upon the poor preacher, and have not your eyes open, your underſtandings enlightened to ſee the treaſure of unſearchable riches brought to your hand by this goſpel, and brought to the very door of your heart! Rom. x. 8.

My friends, I look upon you, as I do upon myſelf, to be a company of dying worms; and am dealing with you in the name of the living God, the living Jeſus, that you may live for ever in him. We are all going to the grave; where our neareſt friends and forefathers have gone before us. I ſuppoſe there are few here but have either a father or a mother, a huſband, a wife, a brother, a ſiſter, a child, a near and dear friend, lying in the cold bed of the grave; and, in a few years, or days, theſe bodies of yours will lye rotting in the duſt with them. Now, O man, woman; when your body is to be laid in the duſt, would you have your ſoul laid in the boſom of Chriſt? Behold he is now opening his boſom, and opening his heart, that you may enter in: and if your heart were opening to let him in this day, it might yield ſuch a joyful reflection in the hour of death, 'O! I think glorious Chriſt drew out my heart to him, 'at ſuch a communion in Dunfermline; and therefore, "O death where is thy ſting?" I hope to live for ever 'in ſpite of thee.'

My dear friends, it is not only a door of utterance to ſpeak to you that we have been ſeeking to have at this occaſion, but a door of entrance; and Chriſt's entering into your heart by the power of his eternal Spirit. And, *O is he come?* Is he come; yea or not? Are you *welcoming the Father's Beloved*, that hath all things in his hand;

hand; ſaying, "Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?" When he is welcoming you to come to him, are you welcoming him to come to you? Can you ſay, He hath perſuaded me, and I am perſuaded? Have you found him riding in this chariot of the word of grace; riding into your heart, and making it fly open to him, ſaying, 'None but Chriſt, none but Chriſt; O! a thou-'ſand worlds are not to be laid in balance with him. Is there never a heart here ſet a burning and glowing in your boſom towards a precious Chriſt? I am confident there is ſome; but wo is me, that all the hearts in this houſe, are not ſet in a fire of love towards a lovely Jeſus! O what a joyful ſound may this be in the ears of poor ſinners! Chriſt, and all things in his hand, as a pledge of his Father's love to him and you! and this bleſſed bargain offered freely to you! "Ho! every one that thirſteth, come to theſe waters; he that hath no money come; come without money, and without price!" O Sirs, the beſt penny-worth, the nobleſt bargain that ever mortal ears heard tell of! All things for nothing! all things for nothing! and this to be had by you, ſinner, who are leſs than nothing, and worſe than nothing! Though you have an empty purſe; yet you need not be a baſhful merchant here; for the more poor and empty that you are, the welcomer to him that hath all things in his hand. Chriſt requires nothing as a price of his fulneſs, but want, and worthleſſneſs, and miſery: It is for the ſupply of ſuch that he hath this fulneſs. Say not then, that you have no right to it; for God offers it to you, and you need it; and there is right enough. If you ſay, Was he able, in his humbled ſtate, when he came in the fleſh? And is he not able in his exalted ſtate, when he comes in the Spirit, to deſtroy the works of the devil? I am not only poor, but perverſe; and am afraid of hell, becauſe I have ſinned to the uttermoſt. Why, he that hath all things, hath all power, and is able to ſave to the uttermoſt: your uttermoſt is great, but God's uttermoſt is infinitely greater. Say not, Satan hath confirmed his right to you by your long trade of ſinning; for, Chriſt owns no preſcription of that kind; and it is his errand here this day to come and deſtroy the

works of the devil: for this cauſe was the Son of God manifeſted.

Is any here thinking, 'Yea, but I am an apoſtate; 'guilty of many relapſes; may not I deſpair?' No, no, man; he that hath all things in his hand, has a plaiſter for all ſores, and one for a falling-ſickneſs among the reſt: "I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely. Though you have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return;" tho' you have run to the devil, to your luſts and idols, yet come to me. 'But is it poſ-'ſible that there is a door of hope for me, when, not-'withſtanding all that you have ſaid, I find all things 'wrong with me?' Why, man, will you tell me, what ſtate were all things into, when the Father put them in Chriſt's hand? I ſuppoſe all things were wrong by the fall of Adam; the devil was rejoicing, ſin was raging, death was reigning, juſtice was flaming, hell was gaping, and all things were wrong; and then the Father put them all in Chriſt's hand, that he might ſet them right. Why, then, did the Father love the Son, and give all things into his hand, even in that ſtate? Then, for the love of Chriſt Jeſus, put all things that are wrong with you, into his hand, that he may right them, for well can he do it. And as the Father did put honour upon him by doing ſo, and glorified his Son; ſo this is the way for you to honour and glorify Chriſt: and as in this way you ſhall have everlaſting life by him, ſo he ſhall have everlaſting honour by you, 2 Theſ. i. 13.

If after all, you ſay, "You cannot receive him, you "cannot believe, you cannot come to him." Well it is true, you can do nothing; but there is ſomething I would aſk, if you can do, and that is, "Can you re-"fuſe him? Can you reject him? Can you ſtand out "againſt him? Can your hearts ſay, for all that you "have heard of him, that you care not for him, that "you are better pleaſed with the world, and your luſts?" If you cannot for your heart do theſe things, then I hope you ſhall be able to believe in him; for faith does not ly in your doing any thing, but in your employing Chriſt to do all, and ſaying, "He that hath all things "*in his hand*, muſt do all things for me." Faith is never

never truly acted under a ſenſe of ability to believe, but under a ſenſe of utter inability; and therefore, if you can ſay, "Though I find my own weakneſs and inabi-"lity to believe, yet I think, by this revelation of "Chriſt, made to me, God hath made me willing, that "Chriſt, who hath all things in his hand, ſhould be all "things to me, and do all things for me; willing, with "a thouſand good wills, that he ſhould put all things "that are evil out of me, and put all things that are "good within me; and willing that he ſhould be all "things that relate to wiſdom, and illuminate all things "that relate to holineſs and ſanctification; and all things "that relate to happineſs and complete redemption." Is it ſo with you? Then you have got a heart to join hand with him that hath all things in his hand; and you may gladly go to a communion-table, and get the bargain ſealed between him and you; and you may boaſt and glory in your all-ſufficient Head and Huſband, whom God hath furniſhed in this manner. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

SER-

SERMON LXXXII.

The LAW of GOD's Houſe.*

EZEK. xliii. 12.

This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy: behold, this is the law of the houſe.

IT is moſt ſuitable and neceſſary, that theſe who have been making a ſolemn profeſſion of their being of the houſhold of faith; who have been eating and drinking in God's houſe, as fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God, ſhould know the order and law of the houſe: and, therefore, I lay before you a ſhort ſum of it, very emphatically here expreſſed; *This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy: behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

In the beginning of this chapter, we have an account of the glory of God filling the temple, particularly ver. 5. and then a promiſe of God's continuing his preſence in his church, ver. 7, 8. to the purging them from their idolatry, corruption, and defilement, which here they are put in mind of, for their conviction and humiliation. From ver. 10. and downward, we have Iſrael exhorted to faith and repentance; "Shew the houſe to the houſe of Iſrael, that they may be aſhamed of their iniquity." The temple was a token of God's kindneſs, and ſymbol of

* This ſermon was preached on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at *Dunfermline*, July 16th, 1732.

his

his preſence, as well as a type of Chriſt the true temple, and of the New-teſtament church. And when he enjoins to ſhew the houſe to the houſe of Iſrael, that they may be aſhamed, we may remark, that the way wherein a gracious God ſhames people for their ſin, is to ſhow them his kindneſs and gracious preſence: thus he puts them out of countenance, and ſets them a-bluſhing, ch. xvi.63. "That thou mayſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord God."—Again, ver. 11. "If they be aſhamed of all that they have done, then ſhow them the form of the houſe, and the faſhion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their ſight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." When his kindneſs makes them aſhamed of their ſin, then he ſhows them more and more of his kindneſs, and grants them more and more of his gracious preſence. In the cloſe of ver. 11. "Write it in their ſight, that they keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." Here remark, that the privileges of God's houſe and people do not ſuperſede their duty, but bind them more ſweetly and ſtrictly thereunto; and therefore, obedience is here enjoined, and thereupon here is the rule laid down, *This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy: behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

In which words we may notice the four following particulars.

1. What is the matter of the law of God's houſe, namely, holineſs; that all the inhabitants be holy: for, "Holineſs becometh God's houſe for ever."

2. The degree of that holineſs which becometh his houſe, viz. that it be *moſt holy*; the perfection of holineſs is required.

3. Notice the extent thereof, *from the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about.* Formerly, only the ſanctuary was moſt holy; but now in the goſpel-

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times, to which this prophecy hath a reference, the whole mount of the houſe ſhall be ſo, and the whole limit thereof; all the courts, all the chambers, and every part of the houſe, ſhall be as the moſt holy place.

4. The double aſſurance given us concerning this ordinance of God's houſe, *This is the law of the houſe;* and again, *Behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

By the *moſt holy* in the text, we are to underſtand, either the privilege of the houſe of God in the goſpel-times, namely, that all believers in Chriſt have acceſs unto the holy of holies, and boldneſs to enter into the holieſt, Heb. x. 19.: they being all ſpiritual prieſts, a royal prieſthood, they have acceſs, not in the virtue of the blood of bulls and goats, but in the virtue of the blood of Jeſus; and with this advantage alſo, above the high-prieſt under the law, that, wherever we are, we have acceſs through Chriſt to the Father: or, by the *moſt holy*, we are to underſtand the duty of the church of God, or children of his houſe, that they be moſt holy; and indeed the former privilege lays the ſtrongeſt foundation for, and brings them under the ſtricteſt obligation to, the duty. According to the view we have here of the *moſt holy*, accordingly we are to underſtand what is to be meant by *the law of the houſe.*

If by *moſt holy*, we underſtand the privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place; then, by *the law of the houſe*, we are to underſtand the law of grace, the law of faith, the goſpel, or God's act of grace towards us, expreſſed in the promiſe.

Again, if by the *moſt holy*, we underſtand the quality of the church, and the duty of all the children of the houſe, that they be moſt holy; then, by *the law of the houſe*, we are to underſtand the precept of the moral law as a rule of holineſs, duty, and obedience toward God. Both theſe, I ſuppoſe, may be included; and the former as the means of the latter. Goſpel-privileges making way for goſpel-holineſs, according to the order of the covenant of grace, in oppoſition to that of works, where Do, and Live, made duty go before the privilege; whereas here, Live, and Do, makes the privilege the foun-

foundation of duty, and the ſtrong baſis on which all goſpel-holineſs ſtands.

By *the top of the mountain*, and *the whole limit thereof round about*, we are to underſtand the univerſality of this holineſs, and the extent both of that privilege of admiſſion to the holy place, and of that obligation upon the privileged to be a holy people.

OBSERV. "That univerſal holineſs is ſo much the "eſtabliſhed law of God's houſe, that the whole "family, being privileged with acceſs to the moſt "holy place, are thereupon under the ſtrongeſt "obligation to be the moſt holy people."

The proof of this doctrine I refer to the proſecution of it in the following method, as the Lord may aſſiſt.

I. I would ſpeak a little of *the houſe of God.*
II. Hint at the nature of that holineſs that is peculiar to the houſe of God.
III. Show that this is *the law of the houſe;* and why it is ſaid to be ſo, again and again.
IV. Touch at the extent of this holineſs required by the law of God's houſe, *upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about.*
V. Conſider a little the privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place.
VI. Show that this privilege obliges the whole to be the moſt holy people. And then,
VII. Make Application of the whole in ſeveral Uſes.

I. I am firſt to ſpeak a little of *the houſe of God.* The church is the houſe of God; "If a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God?" 1 Tim. iii. 5. And it is ſo called on ſeveral accounts:

1. God is the builder of it; "He that built all things is God," Heb. iii. 4. The church is as glorious a piece of work as the building of heaven and earth; yea, more glorious. It is the work of glorious Omnipotence, to make life out of death; he makes theſe that were dead in ſins to be living ſtones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. "What ſhall one anſwer the meſſengers of the nations? That the Lord hath

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founded Zion, and the poor of his people ſhall truſt in it," [or, *betake themſelves to it*,] Iſa. xiv. 32.

2. Becauſe God is the repairer of it: it is he that repairs the waſte places, and the deſolations of many generations, Iſa. xli. 4. Aud this is alſo a glorious work; "When the Lord ſhall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory," Pſal. cii. 16. It is too glorious for a creature; he that is God as well as man hath the honour of it aſcribed to him; "He, even he ſhall build the temple of the Lord, and he ſhall bear the glory," Zech. vi. 13. He may raiſe up inſtruments, but he himſelf is the principal agent. Saints may weep for Zion, but the Lord muſt rebuild and repair it.

3. Becauſe God is the dweller therein: he dwells there where he ſets up his ordinances, though he confines not himſelf to places; "In all places where I record my name I will come to thee, and bleſs thee," Exod. xx. 24. God is known by his ordinances, as we are known by our names; "The Lord hath choſen Zion; he hath deſired it for his habitation. This is my reſt for ever; here will I dwell, for I have deſired it," Pſal. cxxxii. 13, 14.

4. Becauſe God is the governor thereof: He alone gives laws of everlaſting conſequence, to deſtruction or ſalvation; "There is one Lawgiver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy, James iv. 12. The Lord is our Lawgiver." Popes and patrons may uſurp a government of the church; but the Lord alone is the God of conſcience, and the government is on his ſhoulders.

QUEST. Who are the Members of this houſe of God.

ANSW. The church is either viſible or inviſible. To the viſible church on earth, belong all that have a viſible and credible profeſſion; and it is meet for us to judge that they are ſaints, as the apoſtle ſpeaks to the Philippians, chap. i. 7. But we may be deceived; we know not the heart: therefore it concerns every profeſſor to examine himſelf.—The inviſible church is known to God only; "Nevertheleſs, the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knows them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. Well, but how ſhall I know myſelf to be one of them? Why, it follows, "Let every one *that nameth* the name of Chriſt, depart from iniquity."

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To be of the houſhold of God, is not to be a member of the Preſbyterial government, nor a communicating member of ſuch a congregation; but to be a member of Chriſt.

Quest. What ſort of a *houſe* is the church unto God?

Answ. As it is, 1. His dwelling-houſe; of which already: ſo,

2. It is his pleaſure-houſe; for, "The Lord taketh pleaſure in his people." O wonderful!

3. It is his treaſure-houſe; for, "The Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob the lot of his inheritance:" tho' he cannot be enriched therewith, yet he reckons them his riches, his jewels, which he will make up at the laſt day.

4. The church alſo is his magazine-houſe; built for an armoury, whereon hang a thouſand bucklers, all ſhields of mighty men. God's church is his caſtle; and, "Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." Again,

5. It is his veſſel-houſe, wherein all the veſſels of mercy are hung; and Chriſt is the nail faſtened in a ſure place, on which they hang, Iſa. xxii. 23, 24. Weak and ſtrong are there.

6. It is alſo his banquetting houſe, Song ii. 4. where he and they feed together; he feeds among the lilies, till the day break: and he ſups with them, and they with him, Rev. iii. 20.

II. The next thing propoſed, was, To hint at the nature of that holineſs that is peculiar to the houſe of God. *Holineſs* in the ordinary ſenſe wherein it is attributed to the church and children of God, may be viewed,

1. In its definition. And, I think, it may be thus defined, 'A full renovation of our natures, into the image 'of God, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, by the holy Spirit.' It is called a new birth, a new creation, a new creature: "If any man be in Chriſt Jeſus, he is a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 21. We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works." It is the image of God, who is holineſs itſelf. It is a grace; yea, the conjunction and conſtellation of all the graces. It is a duty, and the ſum and ſubſtance of all duty.

2. We may view it in its ſpring; it is neither natural

nor acquired. It is not to be taken up by the ſtrength of reaſon, nor the power of free-will, nor by the force of conviction and reſolution from within or without: nay, "He that hath wrought us to the ſelf-ſame thing is God." It is not to be aſcribed to the virtue of ordinances, nor the worth of inſtruments, but to the powerful efficiency of the holy Spirit of God; the ſanctifying Spirit. Art, nature, education, can do nothing here; it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

3. We may view it in the ſubject of it, and that is the believer in Chriſt, his whole man; "The God of peace ſanctify you wholly; ſoul, body, and ſpirit," 1 Theſ. v. 2. If ye aſk, Where is the ſeat of holineſs, in the head, or the heart, or the conſcience; in the inward or outward man? We reply, The ſeat of holineſs is not in any one of them, but in all of them: it is a leaven that leavens the whole lump. The holy man hath a ſanctified enlightened underſtanding, to diſcern ſpiritual things, which before he underſtood not; a ſanctified will, inclining to ſpiritual things, which before he hated; a ſanctified memory, to mind heavenly things, which before was only earthly; a ſanctified conſcience, awakened to check for ſin, and excite to duty; a ſanctified lip, to ſpeak of God, and to ſpeak to him, and for him; a ſanctified life, to glorify God.

4. We may view it in the parts of it, which are two; a ceaſing to do evil, and a learning to do good. The former is the privative, and the latter the poſitive part of it.—There is the privative part of holineſs, which is called mortification; that is, a heart purged from the love of every ſin, and a life purged from the practice of every ſin: ſin is left in the heart, but is not loved nor liked; nay, it is hated and diſliked: it may remain, but it cannot reign where holineſs is.—There is the poſitive part of holineſs, which is called vivification, or a living unto God, by a life of dependance on him, and a life of obedience to him. The man not only ceaſes to do evil, but he learns to do well. It is, in ſhort, a walking with God, a walking in Chriſt, and a walking

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in the Spirit.—After this hint of the nature of holineſs, I proceed,

III. To the Third thing, which was, To ſhew that this is the law of the houſe; and why it is here ingeminate and doubled, with a *Behold, this is the law of the houſe.* For clearing this head, you would conſider three things: 1. What law it is that is called the law of the houſe. 2. How holineſs is the law of the houſe. 3. The reaſon why this is redoubled.

1*ſt*, What law it is that is called *the law of the houſe.* For the clearing of this, ye would conſider three laws that the houſe of God hath always had ſome concern in.

1. There is a law from which the houſe is delivered; that is, the law of works, or the covenant of works: this is the law they are delivered from; "Ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14. They are not under it, to be either juſtified or condemned; they are neither under the command of it, to be juſtified by their obedience; nor under the threatening of it, to be condemned for their diſobedience. Their title to eternal life ſtands upon Chriſt's doing and obedience; therefore they have nothing to do with the Do and Live of that covenant: their ſecurity from eternal death, ſtands upon Chriſt's dying and ſuffering; therefore they have nothing to do with the penalty of that covenant, "If thou doeſt not, thou ſhalt die." Chriſt has delivered them from the curſe of this law, being made a curſe for them. The law of works required holineſs, indeed, in perfection; but in ſuch a form, and under ſuch a penalty, that, if there were no other law but this, we ſinners and breakers of the law, would be irrecoverably loſt. By this law, holineſs is loſt, becauſe the law is violated; and therefore by the deeds thereof, no fleſh can be juſtified in God's ſight: for ſinners to be juſtified by works, or by the law, is a contradiction; the law can never juſtify a breaker of it, unleſs he hath a perfect righteouſneſs from another quarter and ſource than himſelf: Therefore,

2. As there is a law from which the houſe is deliver-

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ed, *viz.* the law of works; ſo there is a law by which the houſe is recovered and relieved, namely, the law of faith, or the covenant of grace. Of both theſe laws, which are clearly diſtinguiſhed by the apoſtle, you read, Rom. iii. 27. "Where is boaſting then? it is excluded; By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith." This law of faith is nothing elſe but the covenant of grace and the doctrine of the goſpel. In a word, it is the promiſe, Gal. iii. 21. And it is called a law, both in oppoſition to the covenant of works, to ſhow that believers are not under the law of works, but the law of grace; and alſo to ſhew, that the free promiſes of the goſpel are a law that God makes to himſelf in the behalf of ſinners, or an act of the parliament of heaven. Acts of grace paſt there require no condition on the ſinner's part, but only of the Surety, whoſe blood and righteouſneſs is the condition of all the promiſes of God; which, therefore, are ſaid to be Yea and Amen in Chriſt, to the glory of God. And it is called a law of faith, becauſe the goſpel, properly, is not a law to be obeyed; but a law to be believed. It is not a law of commands, to be fulfilled by us; but a law of promiſes, to be fulfilled upon us, in a way of free grace: and therefore, here nothing is to be wrought or expected by works, but all things to be expected by grace, or believed upon the faithfulneſs of a promiſing God; "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs," Rom. iv. 5.—This law of faith is ſo much the law of God's houſe, that this is the very law that erects the houſe: it ſtands upon the law of faith; I mean, upon the free promiſe of God, which is the object and ground of faith.—All the privileges and immunities of the houſe are owing to the law of faith.—By the law of faith, or goſpel-promiſe, ſinners are warranted to come into the moſt holy place, and ſo they come to be made the moſt holy people.—In this law, holineſs is promiſed; by it, holineſs is wrought.—In this law of faith, faith itſelf is promiſed, or grace and ſtrength to believe; "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power," Pſalm cx. 3. "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men *after me*," John xii. 32. This abſolute promiſe is in-

definitely

definitely diſpenſed to ſinners, that they may look unto and rely upon this conquering power and drawing grace of God. — By this law of faith, I ſay, the houſe is delivered. Again,

3. There is a law by which the houſe is governed; namely, the law of love: I mean, the moral law, as it is a rule of life and holineſs, not a rule of acceptance, (this were to make it a covenant of works) but a rule of obedience, in the hand of Chriſt. This is the law, which, by Moſes, is reduced to ten words, ten commandments: and I call it a law of love, becauſe our Lord Jeſus reduced it into two words; namely, love to God, and love to our neighbour: And the apoſtle reduced it to one word, *viz.* Love; "The end of the commandment is love," 1 Tim. i. 5. And again, "Love is the fulfilling of the law," by which the houſe is governed. It may be called a law of love, becauſe, as love is the cord, by which God draws his houſhold to obedience; ſo love is the motive that engages them to obey it: they obey, not from ſlaviſh fear, like theſe that are under the yoke of the law, as a covenant: but love, which caſts out fear. Chriſt's yoke is eaſy, becauſe it is a loving yoke; not driving by violence, but drawing them kindly by the cord of love in every duty; not requiring rigorouſly, under pain of death and damnation, but conſtraining ſweetly with delight to do the will of God. It is not a grievous law, requiring obedience, but giving no ſtrength, and ſeeking brick without ſtraw; but a gracious law, lined with love and grace, promiſing ſtrength to obey, working in them both to will and to do. Hence his commandments are not grievous; duties are not gravamenous; ordinances are not a heavy burden; but rather like a chariot paved with love for the daughters of Jeruſalem. — This is the law by which the houſe is governed pleaſantly and peaceably; for he that hath the government upon his ſhoulders, is the Prince of peace.

The conſideration of theſe three laws may clear your view about the law of the houſe: the law, from which the houſe is delivered, is the law of works, or covenant of works; the law, by which the houſe is delivered and recovered, is the law of faith, or covenant of grace;

and the law, by which the houſe is governed, is the law of love, or moral law, as a rule in the hand of a loving Jeſus. Now, by the violation of the firſt of theſe, holineſs was loſt; by the publication of the ſecond, holineſs is reſtored; and by the promulgation of the third, holineſs is required and eſtabliſhed as a rule, for directing the houſhold in the way of holineſs. This leads me,

2*dly*, To the ſecond queſtion here, *viz.* How *holineſs* is the law of the houſe? For clearing this, it is neceſſary to remember, that the threefold law that I have mentioned, is fitly preſented to us in the word of God. For, by the firſt, we are convinced of our unholineſs; *By the law is the knowledge of ſin:* By the ſecond, we are enlightened to ſee where holineſs is to be had, namely, in the holy covenant, the holy Jeſus, whom God hath given to be the covenant of the people, as the goſpel declares: By the third, we are directed in the way of holineſs. The firſt is not the law of the houſe; for, they are delivered from it; only God makes uſe of it as a mean ſubſervient to bring ſinners to Chriſt, or to bring them to his houſe, where the only law is the two laſt; the law of faith, and the law of love. Now, the ſpiritual houſe of Chriſt is a holy building, where holy faith and holy obedience, comprehend all the holineſs of the houſe; and, becauſe it is to be built up in the moſt holy faith, therefore the law of faith, or covenant of grace, is the law of the houſe, diſcovering the object and the ground of faith: and, becauſe it is to be built up in a moſt holy obedience, therefore the law of love, or moral law, as a rule, is the law of the houſe, directing and binding them to this obedience: in the former, holineſs is promiſed; in the latter, holineſs is injoined.

1. As to the law of faith, or the goſpel, holineſs is to be conſidered as the privilege of the houſe; and by this law of faith it is viewed as a purchaſed privilege, as a promiſed privilege, as a privilege freely conferred, and a privilege freely continued.

2. As to the law of love, or moral law, holineſs is to be conſidered as the duty of the houſe: for, holineſs is *the matter* of the law; holineſs is the end of it; holineſs is

is the ſum of it: it forbids nothing but unholineſs, it requires nothing but holineſs; "As he that has called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation; becauſe it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy," 1 Pet. i. 15. The law of love muſt be a holy law; for, as all unholineſs is compriſed in enmity to God and man, ſo all holineſs is compriſed in love to God and man.

3*dly*, The third queſtion here was, Why is it ingeminate and doubled? *This is the law of the houſe; Behold, this is the law of the houſe:* Why is it twice proclaimed in the text?

1. It imports, That this law of the houſe, reſpecting holineſs, is an indiſpenſible law: therefore it is notified; and again notified with a *behold*, that none may pretend ignorance. The moral law, materially conſidered, is eternally binding.

2. It imports, That ye are deaf and dull of hearing; or, "Hearing, we do not hear; but, like the deaf adder, ſtop our ear at the voice of the charmer:" and at the beſt are ready to forget that this is the law of the houſe. Therefore we are aſſured of it again and again.

3. It imports, That there is danger in neglecting this advertiſement; and, in being remiſs and ſlack in the ſtudy of holineſs, it endangers the houſe; for, tho' the houſhold of faith are all well intitled to heaven, and well ſecured from hell, yet the law of the houſe hath a ſanction ſuitable to the children of the family; "If his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my ſtatutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes," Pſal. lxxxix. 30,—32. The rod of God is terrible, even to his children.

4. It may import, That this is the beginning and the end of true religion: therefore, that this is the law of the houſe, is both at the beginning and the end of the text. Here is the preface, *This is the law of the houſe;* here is the concluſion of the whole matter, *Behold, this is the law of the houſe.* This boundary is ſet ſet round about the houſe of God; and, *Holineſs to the Lord*, muſt be the motto of the houſe, from the top to the bottom thereof. This leads,

IV. To the Fourth thing propoſed, namely, The extent of this law of holineſs: *Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy.*—I think, in general, this ſpeaks out the univerſality of that holineſs God calls for in his houſe.—It ſhould be univerſal ſubjectively, the whole heart, and all the faculties of the ſoul, ſhould be engaged in the ſtudy of holineſs; we are to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, ſoul, ſtrength, and mind.—It ſhould be univerſal objectively, with reſpect to all the commands of God; "Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect to all thy commandments," without exception, without limitation.—It ſhould be univerſal intenſively, with the utmoſt intenſeneſs of ſoul; "Following the Lord with full purpoſe of mind.—I ſaid, I will take heed to my way. I have ſworn, and I will perform it, That I will keep thy righteous judgments."—And it muſt be univerſal extenſively, with reſpect to all times and ſeaſons, companies and occaſions, places and circumſtances.—The law of the houſe binds to holineſs univerſal in all theſe reſpects.

But more particularly, the extent of this holineſs in the houſe of God, as here expreſſed, *Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about*, ſeems to me to import an univerſality, reſpecting every thing that relates to the houſe of God, the church of God: the expreſſion ſuits the Old-teſtament diſpenſation, while the material temple ſtood upon the top of the mountain; but the goſpel-meaning thereof, as it reſpects the New-teſtament church, ſeems to be, that every thing about God's houſe, from the top to the bottom, ſhall be moſt holy, as becomes the ſpiritual temple of God. It ſays,

1. That all the officers ſhall be moſt holy; miniſters, elders, deacons; all that bear any veſſels in God's houſe; 'Be ye clean, ye that bear the veſſels of the Lord,' Iſ. lii. 11. And hence, when God comes to purge and purify his church, he is ſaid particularly to purify the ſons of Levi, Mal. iii. 3. Surely we, whoſe office is to go up to the top of the mount, ought to have holy feet to tread ſuch a holy place; that it may be ſaid of us, "How beautiful, *on* the mountains, are the feet of them that preach the *goſpel of* peace!" Alas! many officers in God's houſe, among

among us, that have moſt of the beauty of holineſs about them, God is faſt taking them away. He ſeems to be taking away the gold and ſilver, and leaving the droſs; and, when he is taking down ſuch as were props and pillars in the houſe, what ſhall we think, but that the houſe is like to fall about our ears, and heavy judgments at the door, when the righteous are taken away from the evil to come! But,

2. It ſays, that all the members of the houſe ſhall be moſt holy, all the children of the family; "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy ſalvation cometh; and they ſhall call them the moſt holy people, the redeemed of the Lord," Iſa. lxii. 11. Every inhabitant of the houſe, every believer, every member of Chriſt, every profeſſor of Chriſt, every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, muſt depart from iniquity. It ſays, that, not only miniſters ſhould be holy, but people ſhould be holy; not only the top of the mount, but the whole limit thereof round about. All that enter within the walls of Zion muſt be holy, otherwiſe they are not indwellers, like children; but only incomers, like dogs; that ſhall be baniſhed out with diſgrace, and never admitted to the higher houſe.

5. It ſays, That all the courts and judicatories of the houſe ſhould be moſt holy; Synods moſt holy, and General Aſſemblies of the houſe, moſt holy; *Upon the top of the mount, the whole limit thereof round about.* When theſe courts and judicatories of the houſe, or Aſſemblies of the church, whether inferior or ſuperior ones, are moſt holy, and purged with the ſpirit of judgment, and ſpirit of burning, then they are intitled to Heaven's protection; "The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place in mount Zion, and upon her aſſemblies, a cloud and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire by night," Iſa. iv. 4, 5. But when in days of degeneracy, corruption, and defection, like ours *, they become moſt unholy, then they are expoſed to ruin and deſolation.

* At the time when this Sermon was preached, matters, both in the church and ſtate, were in a moſt deplorable condition: error in principle, and immorality in practice, every-where abounding; a reliſh for true religion, and genuine piety much on the decline; a deviating from attained to Reformation-purity, and a falling from firſt love, greatly upon the increaſe.

4. It ſays, That all the acts and ſtatutes of the houſe are to be moſt holy. And indeed the acts of Aſſemblies and Judicatories of the church are to be regarded only according to their holineſs, and agreeableneſs to the holy word of God; "To the law and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them," Iſa. viii. 20. Acts iſſued even from the top of the mountain, if they be not according to the law of the houſe, are to be rejected, oppoſed, and proteſted againſt, as the commandments of men, and not the commandments of God; "In controverſy they ſhall ſtand in judgment, and they ſhall judge it according to my judgments; and they ſhall keep my laws and my ſtatutes in all mine aſſemblies," Ezek. xliv. 23, 24. And, indeed, it is but a diſmal time, when the children of Zion are obliged to plead with their mother, and even proteſt againſt her acts and ſtatutes *.

5. It ſays, That all the forms and ordinances of the houſe be moſt holy; I mean, the form of doctrine, the form of worſhip, the form of diſcipline, the form of

* This was a very remarkable year in the church, and gave æra to a very memorable event, viz. the SECCESSION. Our Author here has his eye upon the conduct of the Aſſembly this year [viz 1732]. He uſually noticed any remarkable tranſactions that occurred at the time when he compoſed and delivered his diſcourſes: And therefore, as a key to this, and ſome other ſimilar paſſages, both in this and ſome ſubſequent diſcourſes, it may not be improper briefly to open up the matter. The church was, at this time, in imminent danger; for, not only a pernicious ſcheme of Arian, Arminian, Socinian, and Neonomian doctrine was prevailing, but ſeveral arbitrary Acts and Deciſions had been framed and paſſed in the Supreme Judicatory, and the Lord's heritage much oppreſſed and grieved, by the ſettlement of reclaiming and diſſenting congregations. To clear up the paſſage now before us, we may obſerve, that the Aſſembly's conduct this year was very ſingular and extremely arbitrary, in a double reſpect. — Several Miniſters [forty-two in number] among whom our Author was one, gave in a ſubſcribed Repreſentation to the Aſſembly, for the redreſs of many of the ſteps of defection which the church had gone into. This Repreſentation, though juſt in itſelf, was refuſed ſo much as a hearing by the Aſſembly; whereupon ſuch of the Miniſters as were preſent, offered a proteſt for their exoneration, which was alſo refuſed to be marked. There was a petition of the ſame nature, ſigned by many hundred Elders and Chriſtian people given in to the ſame Aſſembly, and ſhared the ſame fate.—The Aſſembly did not ſtop here, but paſſed an Act concerning the planting of vacant churches, which lodged the deciſive power of electing Miniſters, in a conjunct meeting of elders and heritors (and ſo depriving the Chriſtian people of their juſt right), no other qualification being required of ſaid heritors but their being Proteſtants, however much diſaffected to the government both in church and ſtate. This was matter of deep regret to many, and truly afflicting to ſeveral Miniſters, who accordingly proteſted againſt the Aſſembly; ſome of whom were *afterwards* ſeverely ſentenced, for their faithfully teſtifying againſt theſe corruptions and incroachments.

govern-

government, that they be according to the ſcripture-pattern; as it was ſaid to Moſes concerning the form of the tabernacle, "Look that thou make it after the pattern that was ſhewed thee in the mount," Exod. xxv. 40. compared with Acts vii. 44. Heb. viii. 5. The doctrine, ſound and lively; worſhip, pure and ſpiritual; diſcipline, pure and impartial; and government, beautiful and orderly, is the outward glory of the church: and God hath ſaid, "Upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence," Iſa. iv. 5. But in ſo far as the fences are taken away, in as far is the glory departed from Iſrael, and the ark of God taken by the Philiſtines, within or without the houſe. The holineſs of doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of the houſe, comprehending the top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof, ought to be defended, and contended for, that it be not ſpoiled, corrupted, and defaced by theſe who make themſelves famous for lifting up hammers and axes upon the carved work; and the rather, that the church of Scotland, particularly, has been ſo often in our Reformation-days ſolemnly ſworn, by National Covenant, to the defence thereof, againſt all anti-chriſtian, unſcriptural, and unholy forms and orders whatſoever.

6. It ſays, That all the chambers and rooms of the houſe ſhould be moſt holy; I mean, all the ordinances of the houſe, whether public, or private, or ſecret; which are like ſo many chambers and rooms of the houſe to be kept clean and moſt holy; for, "He will be ſanctified of all them that come nigh him," Lev. x. 3. The outer rooms and public chambers of ſolemn ordinances, word, and ſacraments; the more private chambers of ſpiritual conference and family-worſhip; and the ſecret chambers of retired devotion, the chamber of meditation, the chamber of prayer, ſhall all be moſt holy, and occupied in the moſt holy manner. Not only all the public rooms, but all the ſecret cloſets of the houſe ſhall be moſt holy; not only the top of the mount, but the whole limit thereof round about; whatever part of the houſe we enter, is to be moſt holy, in the exerciſe of faith, love, and all the holy graces of the Spirit, and in ſpiritual endeavours, through grace, to get all that are about

the houſe made holy, and all things that are within the houſe, and without the houſe, and round about the houſe, the top of the mount, the whole limit thereof round about; this is the law of the houſe. The Lord knows how little it is obſerved now!

V. The next thing propoſed, was, To touch a little at the privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place. This being a ſpecial part of the goſpel that lies in the text, hid under this Old-teſtament phraſe; I would open it up in theſe two or three remarks.

1. "That acceſs to the moſt holy place, is nothing elſe "but acceſs to the moſt holy God; and therefore, it is "the moſt glorious privilege that a ſinner can be ad-"vanced unto." The ſanctuary, or holy of holies in the Old-teſtament temple, was a ſymbol and type of the gracious preſence of God; and to come to that, was to come to God: and the holy of holies is in the New-Teſtament, called a throne of grace, Heb. iv. 16. And what is it to come to the throne of grace, or mercy-ſeat, but juſt to come to a merciful God, a gracious God in Chriſt? Therefore it is there ſaid, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Where will we find mercy or grace, but with a merciful and gracious God? This is then the moſt holy place to which there is acceſs.

Remark 2. "That acceſs to the moſt holy place is "by the blood of Jeſus." The prieſts, under the law, went into the holy place with blood of bulls and goats; but Chriſt, our High-Prieſt, having entered, by his own blood, into the holy place, Heb. ix. 12. "We have bold-neſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus," Heb. x. 19. that is, in the faith of his blood; a juſtice-ſatisfying blood, and ſin-expiating blood: even we guilty ſinners have freedom to come to a juſt and holy God, and boldneſs to expect grace and glory, as the purchaſe of that blood; even that blood which is God-glorifying, ſinner-ſanctifying, heaven-purchaſing.

Remark 3. "That acceſs to the moſt holy place is "the privilege of the whole church." The whole family, *all* within the houſe, have acceſs either proclaimed or obtain-

obtained: All within the viſible church, tho' but in the outer-court, have acceſs proclaimed; "Whoſoever will, let him come." And all within the church inviſible, *viz.* Believers being in the inner-court, have acceſs obtained, and daily admiſſion to the holy place. Only the high-prieſt under the law had acceſs to the holy place, and that once a-year only; but now all believers being a royal-prieſthood, and made kings and prieſts unto their God, have acceſs, not once a-year, Heb. ix. 7. nor once a-month; but, perhaps, once a-week, once a-day; yea, ſeveral times a-day; perhaps, twenty times in one communion-day; even as oft as they get grace to act faith upon a God in Chriſt. This privilege of the whole church, is here repreſented by the top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof round about, having the privilege of the holy place.

Remark 4. 'The privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy 'place, is not only now extended to all perſons within 'the houſe, but alſo every-where, in all places where 'the church or children of God are.' Not only the top of the mount, but the whole limit round about, is the moſt holy place. Under the law, only the ſanctuary was the moſt holy, but under the goſpel the whole mountain ſhall be ſo, and the whole limit thereof round about; in as much as, where-ever the believer is, in public or in ſecret, there he hath acceſs to the moſt holy place, the moſt holy God; according to what our Lord ſaid to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 21. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem, worſhip the Father; but the true worſhippers every-where ſhall worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth." The holy place was formerly hid in a corner of the temple; for, the holy God hid himſelf in a corner, as it were, under the dark diſpenſation: but now the holy place, the holy God, is every-where to be ſeen and enjoyed in Chriſt. The vail of the temple is rent in twain, by the death of Chriſt; and the holy of holies is expoſed, that whoſoever will, may come and ſee, come and partake, come and enjoy God through Jeſus Chriſt, through whom the door of acceſs is opened to us Gentiles, as well as it was to the Jews; "Thro'

him

him we both have acceſs, by one Spirit, unto the Father," Eph. ii. 8. The moſt holy place is not now confined to the top of the mountain, where the temple ſtood, but extended to the whole mountain, and the whole limit thereof round about. *This is the law of the houſe*, the privilege of the houſe, according to the law of faith, or covenant of grace, wherein the grace of God, that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared unto all men. O has it ſo appeared unto you this day, as that you find that you have got acceſs to the moſt holy place! Then ſurely you are obliged to be the moſt holy people. Hence,

VI. The ſixth head propoſed, was, To ſhow, that this privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place, obliges the whole houſhold of God, that are thus privileged, to be the moſt holy people. This grace of God that hath appeared to all men, does not, cannot lead to licentiouſneſs, but teaches to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts; and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, Tit. ii. 11, 12. This privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place; brings us not only under greater obligations to holineſs than Pagans, that are far from the moſt holy place; not only under greater obligations to holineſs than profeſſors, who only are admitted to the outer-court, and not to the moſt holy place; and not only under greater obligations to holineſs than Jews, who were only admitted, by their high-prieſt, to the holy place in the material temple; but alſo it lays us under greater obligations to holineſs than Adam in a ſtate of innocency, ſuppoſe we were as innocent as he was before the fall, and that the covenant of works were on the field, promiſing life to our perfect obedience; for, when you are admitted to the moſt holy place, then you ſee everlaſting righteouſneſs, and perfect obedience wrought to your hand, and eternal life purchaſed to your hand; and therefore are obliged by the law of love and gratitude, to ſerve the God that hath ſaved you, and not to work hard for your life. And which of theſe are the ſtrongeſt ties to love and obedience, namely, to find God ſaying, Do, and do perfectly, and *you ſhall* have eternal life for your pains? Or, to find God

God giving you life, ſalvation, righteouſneſs, and all in Chriſt; and, from the faith thereof, kindling love in your ſoul, and conſtraining you to ſerve him in gratitude? If this be the ſtrongeſt obligation to holineſs, then believers in Chriſt are under ſtronger obligations to holineſs, than ever Adam was in a ſtate of innocency.

Acceſs to the moſt holy place obliges us to be the moſt holy people, both effectively and argumentatively.

1. Effectively and powerfully; for, when one hath acceſs to the moſt holy place, then he ſees the glory of God; and, "Beholding this glory, he is changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus, what the law teaches preceptively, the goſpel teaches effectively. It is ſaid of theſe that are mounted to the upper ſtory of the houſe of God, to heaven, They are like him, becauſe they ſee him as he is. Being come to the moſt holy place, they ſee the moſt holy God, and are made like him in holineſs. This privilege is commenced in the lower houſe; the more that believers ſee the moſt holy God in the moſt holy place, or the glory of God in the face of Chriſt, the more they are like unto him. When they come boldly to the throne of grace, or to the holy of holies, then they obtain mercy, and find grace to help them, and grace to ſtrengthen them in all the duties of holineſs. All their holineſs comes from that moſt holy place, to which they have acceſs. And thus it obliges them to holineſs, ſweetly, powerfully, neceſſarily, and effectively.

2. Argumentatively; it obliges them to be the moſt holy people; for, acceſs to the moſt holy place furniſhes them with an argument drawn from equity; "What! ſhall we, that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein?" Rom. vi. 2. Have we by acceſs to God, got a dead ſtroak given to the tyrant ſin, and ſhall we return to ſlavery? *God forbid.* Acceſs to the moſt holy place furniſhes with an argument drawn from gratitude; "Shall I thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh and unwiſe? Is not he my Father that hath bought me?" Deut. xxxii. 6. Has he allowed me acceſs to him, and ſhall I ſpurn at ſuch bowels, and ſpit on the face of ſuch love?—At the moſt holy

place

place the man ſees that there is mercy with God that he may be feared and obeyed, and ſo is encouraged to duty; and there he ſees that it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do: there he ſees that the law he is under, is not a law of works, but a law of love, where all the commands are love-commands; "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and the threatenings, love-threatenings, not of vindictive wrath, but of fatherly diſpleaſure. The law-threatening of hell, and vindictive wrath, works wrath and enmity, which is the height of diſobedience; while the man fears that God will damn him, he flees from God as an enemy: but goſpel-threatenings, if we may ſo call them, work upon love, and inflame it, while the believer fears, in a filial manner, ſaying, "O! ſhall I incur my Father's diſpleaſure; and "provoke him to hide his face, and deny me that gra-"cious preſence of his, which is even a heaven upon "earth to me?"—At the moſt holy place, the believer ſees God clothed with a garment of ſalvation, compaſſed with love and grace, and riding, as it were, in the chariot of a free gracious promiſe; not a promiſe of life upon our doing, but a promiſe of grace to do, and of glory to crown our doing; and of grace and glory both, as the reward of Chriſt's doing all.—In a word, when we have acceſs to the moſt holy place, we ſee the place encircled with blood, the mercy-ſeat ſprinkled with blood, and that by this blood the infinite juſtice of God is fully ſatisfied, and that we have to do with him as a reconciled God and friend; and therefore our obligation is not under the authority of an angry Judge, but the authority of a loving Father, teſtifying his everlaſting love to us, by drawing with loving-kindneſs: and ſhall we not kindly run, when thus kindly drawn?——Why then, this privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place, lays us under the ſtricteſt and ſtrongeſt obligation, to be the moſt holy people. *And, behold, this is the law of the houſe:* the bond of love is the ſtrongeſt bond.

VII. I come now to the application of the ſubject. And we ſhall apply it, in the firſt place, by deducing a *few inferences* for information. Is it ſo, that univerſal holineſs

holineſs is ſo much the eſtabliſhed law of God's houſe, that the whole family, being priviliged with acceſs to the moſt holy place, are under the ſtrongeſt obligation to be the moſt holy people? Then,

1. Hence ſee, that God's houſe is not a lawleſs houſe, and believers in Chriſt are not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt; as the apoſtle expreſſes it. The doctrine of grace is no doctrine of licentiouſneſs: though many reproach goſpel-doctrine with a flouriſh of words, in their harangues on morality, under pretence of putting honour upon the law, while yet they neither underſtand law nor goſpel, but miſerably confound and blend them together. *Do we make void the law through faith?* Are we lawleſs Antinomians *, becauſe we declare the freedom of the houſe from the law of works? Alas! many, in their ignorant zeal for this law, diſcover their little acquaintance with the law of the houſe.

2. Hence ſee, that if univerſal holineſs be the law of the houſe, becauſe of the univerſal acceſs there is to the holy place; then, how few appear to be of the houſhold of God in our day, which is a day of univerſal unholineſs, univerſal wickedneſs, univerſal profanity and impiety. Oh! how few in our day go in to the moſt holy place, ſince few appear to be a moſt holy people! Where there is no acceſs to the moſt holy place, there is no holineſs: where little acceſs, little holineſs.

3. Hence ſee the difference betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, in reſpect of the place that holineſs hath in the one and the other. The former being, Do and live; therein duty opens the door to privilege, and man behoved firſt to be holy, before he could be admitted to the holy place: but the latter being, Live and do, therein privilege opens the door to duty, and men muſt firſt have acceſs to the holy place, before they can be a holy people; for they muſt firſt come to Chriſt, or to God in Chriſt, which is the holy

* It was formerly noticed, Vol. I. p. 232. Vol. II. p. 304. 395. Vol. III. p. 44. that a legal turn of mind, and ſtrain of preaching was much upon the increaſe in Scotland: and the patrons and promoters hereof, boldly accuſed and virulently lampooned the champions for, and defenders of, the doctrine of grace, as enemies to the law, and friends to licentiouſneſs.

of holies, and from hence bring all their holineſs. That is one of the reaſons why goſpel-miniſters preach ſo much upon goſpel-privileges, and upon faith in Chriſt entering into the holy place, becauſe this faith works by love, and is the root of all true holineſs; for, when faith looks into the moſt holy place, there it ſees the law hidden in the ark, Jeſus Chriſt, and ſafely kept there; and the believer finds, that, by lying in the warm boſom of Chriſt, it is turned into a law of love.

4. Hence ſee, That it is not ſafe to be without the church of God: for, as it is the houſe where God dwells, and it is beſt dwelling where God dwells; ſo there is acceſs to the moſt holy place to be found there, upon the top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof round about. As long as God dwells in a church, and gives evidence of his preſence in theſe ordinances, let us bleſs him for the day of ſmall things, and wait upon him, who yet hides himſelf, in many reſpects, from the houſe of Jacob. Let us pity thoſe who are without the church: for, *Without are dogs*, and they can have no view of the holy place; and, *Where no viſion is, the people periſh.* And pity theſe who are only within the outer walls of the church, in the outer court, and never got grace to enter into the moſt holy place; and alſo theſe who have been within, and have gone out, and ſeparate from the church; I mean, even ſeparatiſts from the church of Scotland, ſome upon a kind of Independent footing, and others affecting novelties, betaking themſelves to Engliſh popiſh ceremonies, and new modes of worſhip. At the ſame time, many true friends to Preſbytery are on the very borders of ſeparating from this eſtabliſhed church, upon a diſguſt at the defections of the day; and it is to be lamented, that many ſtumbling-blocks have been laid in peoples way: and it is ſure, when a particular church, like Romiſh Babylon, comes to be wholly corrupt, then that rule for ſeparation will hold, *Come out from among them, my people.* This was what juſtified our glorious Reformation from Popery. In this caſe, it is not a ſinful ſeparating from the church of God, but a dutiful ſeparating from the chapel of the devil. *And I own,* that as matters ſtand at preſent in the church

of

of Scotland, we ſeem to be on the very brink of a ſchiſm: but, whatever tenderneſs I deſire to ſhow to weak conſciences, in many circumſtances, I have never as yet, ſeen ground to preach ſeparation *, whatever ground I ſee to teſtify againſt the corruptions and defections of the day, I hope God hath not yet left the houſe; he is yet to be found in theſe galleries of his houſe, the ordinances of his worſhip. Mean time, I have a concern particularly for theſe that are mourning over the defections and defilements of the houſe, and keeping the cleaneſt rooms they can find therein, and whoſe lot is to have officers obtruded upon them, and have not the goſpel, but the law, or mere moral harangues, preached to them; and I deſire to pray they may be directed to their duty in an evil day. This leads me to

A word of lamentation, which is the next uſe I would make of the doctrine. Even on a communion day, when we are holding communion in the houſe of God, we may lament the diſorders and irregularities therein, contrary to the law of the houſe. Surely the houſe of God in our day is a ruinous houſe, and needs to be repaired and reformed. If this be the law of the houſe, that every member, every part, every room of the houſe be moſt holy; then ſurely the law of the houſe is broken and violate in our day; for we may ſee the reverſe of this law, even unholineſs, upon the top of the mountain,

* Our Author, at this time, was not ſo clear for withdrawing from the preſent Judicatories, as he afterwards came to be. And, indeed, all the habile methods had ſcarcely as yet been uſed within doors, by Repreſentations, Petitions, Remonſtrances, Expoſtulations, and Proteſtations: but when all theſe were uſed to no valuable purpoſe, and a deaf ear lent to them; nay, ſentences inflicted for ſo doing, he ſaw juſt ground to withdraw from the preſent corrupt Judicatories, while carrying on a courſe of defection; but never did ſeparate from the church of Scotland in her Conſtitution. We have his full ſentiments on this head, in his Seceſſion from the Judicatories, about five years after this: in which, after ſtating the nature and grounds of his Seceſſion, we have theſe words; "So that, (ſays our Author, adopting the ſentiments of an eminent "Light in this church) here is no ſeparation from the church of Scotland, ei-"ther in her doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, or government; but rather a cleav-"ing more cloſely thereto, by departing or going forth from her backſlidings "and defections, as we are commanded by the Lord, and from ſome Judicato-"ries, becauſe of theſe; and only a negative, paſſive, and conditional with-"drawing; not importing any reſolution never to join with them in any cir-"cumſtance, but a preſent refuſing to follow the declining part of the church, "while carrying on theſe defections, and a chooſing rather to ſtand ſtill and "cleave to that part, though ſmaller, that is endeavouring to retain and main-"tain a covenanted Reformation."

and

and the whole limit thereof round about. Behold, this is the ſad ſtate of the houſe: and, ſince you cannot be duly concerned with knowing the circumſtances of it, I ſhall hint a little at the viſible defects of the viſible part of the houſe among us.

1. Oh! where is perſonal holineſs (to begin at home) among the viſible memembers of the houſe! The law of faith, or the covenant of grace, proclaiming acceſs to the moſt holy place, is the law of the houſe; and yet, alas! how little faith is in the houſe! how little believing or entering into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus! The law of love, or moral law, as a rule of obedience, is the law of the houſe; but, Oh! how little love to God or man iſſuing from that faith! Does not iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold? There is little to be ſeen of faith's working by love, but much to be ſeen of hatred working by unbelief.—It is the law of that houſe, that we love one-another; but, behold, how many are devouring one-another, through malice, envy, pride, and contention!—It is the law of the houſe, more particularly, that we have no other god but the moſt holy God, that we perform no other worſhip, but moſt holy worſhip; that we reverence his name, as the moſt holy name; that we ſanctify his Sabbath, for a moſt holy reſt all the day.—It is the law of the houſe, that we be moſt holy in every relative capacity and ſtation; that we be, according to our place, holy magiſtrates, holy miniſters, holy parents, holy children, holy maſters, holy ſervants.—It is the law of the houſe, that there be no murder, in thought, word, or deed: no whoredom, in thought, word, or deed; no falſe witneſſes, no covetous heart in the houſe; nothing but the moſt holy place, and the moſt holy people: but, ah! where is the ſpirit of holineſs? Where is the exerciſes of holy graces, holy faith, holy love, holy penitency? Where is holy preaching, holy hearing, holy ſinging, holy praying, holy communicating, holy walking? I ſuppoſe, when matters are thoroughly canvaſſed, and ſeriouſly conſidered, there is little to be found among us, but unholy thoughts, unholy words, unholy actions; and little holy lamenting over our unholineſs. Again,

2. If

2. If we look to the public, may we not find matter of lamentation? While it is the law of the houſe of the God of heaven, that nothing be done therein but according to the will of the God of heaven; yet many things are done contrary to his will.—It is the law of the houſe, that the houſe be kept in repair, and do not ly waſte; but, behold the walls are broken down, and the carved work demoliſhed.—It is the law of the houſe, that none be reckoned members of the family but theſe that are a holy nation, a royal prieſthood, a ſpiritual people, 1 Pet. ii. 9.; at leaſt, with reference to the viſible church, that they have a viſible and credible profeſſion: it is not theſe that have worldly lordſhips, lairdſhips, and heritages, that have, upon this account, any title to be the members of Chriſt's ſpiritual houſe and kingdom; for, his kingdom is not of this world; his houſe is diſtinct therefrom: ſuch may be members of God's houſe, but not as they are lords, lairds, heritors, gentles, nobles; ſome ſuch may be called of God into his houſe, but, "Not many noble, not many great men are called," 1 Cor. i. 26. Not many ſtocked with worldly riches, or worldly wiſdom: yet ſuch, under the name of heritors, if they be but Proteſtants in profeſſion, though they were Pagans in practice, ſeem, in our day, to be declared members of God's ſpiritual houſe. But, notwithſtanding, it is the law of the houſe of God, Acts i. 23. 26. vi. 3. xiv. 23. as χειροτονήσαντες, the original word here demonſtrates, that only the true member of the family, wherein every member is a maſter, a king, and a prieſt to his God, ſhould chuſe out from among them, by common ſuffrage, the ſervants and officers of the houſe. And, indeed, it is the law of every houſe, that no ſervant be obtruded upon them by foreigners, againſt the mind of the houſe, or againſt the will of the family; much more is it the law of God's houſe, that neither prince, patron, nor heritor, as denominate only from their temporal eſtate, ſhould have power over God's ſpiritual houſe, in chuſing and electing of their ſpiritual ſervants and officers, to the excluding of the voice and vote of the proper members of the family: yet this law of the houſe is manifeſtly violated by ſome

late Acts in our day*.—Again, it is the law of the houſe, that the doctrine of the goſpel be maintained with zeal, and damnable doctrine be rejected with indignation; yet, how much hath goſpel-doctrine been condemned and darkened in our day†; and damnable doctrine, ſuch as that of Arianiſm, ſlenderly cenſured‡; and many corruptions in doctrine either looked over and tolerated, or not ſufficiently teſtified againſt, and that in a time when the houſe within is polluted with a boundleſs toleration of errors without doors?—It is the law of the houſe, that the oath of God be inviolably maintained, and nothing contrary to it be admitted or allowed; yet, how have our ſolemn oaths to the great God and Maſter of the houſe, *viz.* our Covenants, both national and ſolemn league, been ſolemnly violate, broken, burnt, and buried, and a multitude of ſinful and unneceſſary oaths received and allowed in the room thereof?—It is the law of the houſe, that the worſhip of God be moſt holy, and agreeable to the word and will of God; and that no threſhold be ſet up beſide his threſhold, and poſts by his poſts, Ezek. liv. 8. And yet behold abjured ſuperſtitious worſhip, and Engliſh Popiſh ceremonies ſet up in ſeveral places of the nations; and the guilt hereof is chargeable upon the houſe, in as far as it is not duly regretted, and ſo far as poſſible remedied.—It is the law of the houſe, that the diſcipline therein do not degenerate into cruelty towards the children of the family; and yet, what ground to complain, in our day of eccleſiaſtical tyranny exerciſed towards the people of God, in ſettling many congregations? And thus Chriſt, in his members, is wounded in the houſe of his friends, and his poor deſpiſed

* Our Author here, without doubt, has his eye upon the Act of Parliament made in the 10th year of Q. Anne's reign, Reſtoring Patronage; and the Act of Aſſembly, 1732, concerning the Planting of Vacant Churches. Though it be conſonant both to ſcripture and reaſon, and the practice of the church of Scotland, ſince the Reformation, that the Lord's people, or multitude of diſciples, have a right to chooſe their ſpiritual guides, (Acts i. 23. 26 vi. 3. xiv. 23.) yet theſe acts denudes the Chriſtian people of this liberty to elect their ſpiritual overſeers; the firſt, by lodging the power ſolely in the hands of the patron; and the next, by veſting heritors and elders with the alone right of election.

† It is probable, our Author means the Acts of Aſſembly, Annis 1720, 1722, condemning the doctrine of the Marrow of Modern Divinity. See above, Vol. I. p. 232. Vol. II. p. 304, 305.

‡ This hath a reference to the Proceſs againſt Profeſſor Simſon, formerly briefly cleared up, Vol. II. p. 466. Vol. IV. p. 148.

people

people obliged to ſay of the watchmen, "They ſmote me, they wounded me, they took away my vail from me."—It is the law of the houſe, that the government therein be beautiful, orderly, and holy; and that the ſeveral under-governors of the houſe have an orderly walk and converſation, both in their private families and in their public managements; and that they be clean that bear the veſſels of the Lord: yet, how many officers and elders in the church live very looſly, and neglect the worſhip of God in their families? And ſome of them ſit in our National Aſſemblies, that yet join with the Church of England in their ſuperſtitious worſhip, when in that nation, to the reproach of the Preſbyterial profeſſion.—It is the law of the houſe, that faſts and thankſgivings be appointed therein, when providence calls for it; and yet, how is this turned into diſuetude, and the church loſing ground and ſeeming to give up with, inſtead of aſſerting and exerting her intrinſic power; and ſeemingly ſurrendering it to the hand of the civil magiſtrate, whoſe power ought not to be privative, but cumulative, in this matter? Secular power, and ſpiritual, in a Chriſtian land, ought to be ſweetly ſubſervient one to another, but ought not to be blended or confounded together, nor deſtructive one of another.—It is the law of the houſe, that the Lord and King of the houſe be exalted, and that his royal headſhip and ſovereignty be aſſerted, in oppoſition to all that aſſume to themſelves a ſovereignty, in all cauſes, civil or eccleſiaſtical *; yet this duty hath been fearfully neglected, and the Lord of the houſe many ways affronted in his own family.—It is the law of the houſe, that ſince God orders his own children to plead with their mother, when any confuſion takes place in the family, in order to the redreſſing of what is grievous; that the mother regard the pleading, and redreſs accordingly: and yet, when the children have done ſo in our day, ſhe hath given a deaf ear, and deeper wounds †, inſtead of favour-

* Alluding to the wicked Act of Supremacy, made Anno 1661, after Charles II.'s Reſtoration, declaring him head over all perſons, and in all cauſes, civil and eccleſiaſtic. Inconſiſtent both with the Scriptures and our Standards. See Conf. Faith, ch 30. §. 1, 2. ch. 25. §. 6. ch. 23. §. 3. with the Scriptures quoted.

† Our Author here, no doubt, alludes both to the conduct of the Aſſembly, Annis 1720, 1732.—By the firſt (viz. 1720.), the Aſſembly, by their fifth Act, concerning the Marrow, condemn a bundle of propoſitions, containing doc-

able anſwers. O, if this may ſet them a-pleading with their Father in heaven, who hath ſaid, "When he builds up Zion, he will appear in his glory, and he will regard the prayer of the deſtitute, and not deſpiſe their prayer: this ſhall be written for the generations to come, and the people which ſhall be created ſhall praiſe the Lord."—In a word, it is the law of the houſe, that there be no ſchiſm nor diviſion there, becauſe, "A houſe divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand;" and yet, how many diviſions take place? And, how many grounds are daily laying down for ſchiſm, and matter of offence given by multiplied receſſions from reformation-principles and practices? "Offences muſt come, but wo to them by whom they come." It were endleſs to ſpeak of all the particulars wherein the law of the houſe is violate; only theſe are ſome of the moſt obvious to me, which I ſpeak of as matter of lamentation, that ye may know on what account you need to be concerned for the houſe of God, and to pray for the welfare of Jeruſalem, and the reparation of her walls.

This is the ſtate of the houſe viſible in our day, *Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof*, is become moſt unholy: behold, this is the ſtate of the houſe. And yet, for all this, there remains ſome good thing in the church of Scotland, notwithſtanding all the evils that take place: As,

1. There is a goodly number yet of worthy, faithful, and able miniſters of the goſpel, whereof ſome, perhaps, are but betrayed by the power of temptation, and the ſtrength of carnal reaſoning, to fall in with theſe meaſures in the Lord's houſe, which, after calm and ſedate conſideration, they will be loth to juſtify, and will be ſorry for: therefore,

trines of the greateſt importance. Which conduct, induced ſeveral miniſters, among whom our Author was one, to give in a Repreſentation to the Aſſembly 1721, ſetting forth, That it appeared to them, that the foreſaid condemnatory act and ſentence wounded many goſpel-truths; yet the aſſembly 1722, though partly convinced of the fact, were ſo far from repealing the Act 1720, that they, by their ſeventh Act, rather farther explained, corroborated, and confirmed the ſaid fifth Act, and ſo gave a deeper wound to truth. See Vol. I. p. 232. Vol. II. p. 304.—The aſſembly 1732, not only lent a deaf ear to the Repreſentations and Petitions that were preſented to them, for the Redreſs of Grievances, but utterly rejected them; and gave deeper wounds, by their Act lodging *the ſole* power of election of miniſters into the hands of a conjunct meeting of *heritors* and elders. See above, p. 298.

2. There

2. There are not a few yet, who are, and will be witneſſes for God, againſt all the corruptions of the Lord's houſe, and ready to give their teſtimony againſt the defections of the day wherein we live.

3. There are pure ordinances adminiſtered in the houſe: the word and ſacraments adminiſtered according to the goſpel-inſtitution; and the doctrine of the goſpel preached in purity.

4. There are ſome ſigns and evidences now and then of the Lord's preſence in theſe ordinances, and of his power in the ſanctuary, reviving and ſtrengthening the hearts of his hidden ones, and bringing them to the chambers of the King, even to the holy of holies, under the covert of the blood of Jeſus.

This leads me to an Uſe of Examination, for trying whether or not ye be ſuch members of the houſe of God, as have been privileged with acceſs to the inviſible part of the houſe, the moſt holy place; and what effect this has wrought upon you, to make you holy, as the Lord your God is holy.

1ſt, Have you been admitted to the moſt holy place? Have you got boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, at this occaſion, or formerly? If ſo, then I will tell you,

1. You have loſt all boldneſs and confidence in the fleſh, Phil. iii. 3.; all confidence in yourſelf, all confidence in your own righteouſneſs and worthineſs: nothing keeps you in countenance before God, but your view of the worthineſs and righteouſneſs of Jeſus. Again,

2. What way got you into the holy place, or into the preſence of the moſt holy God. Surely it is not without blood. Can you ſay, that you was carried into the holieſt, as it were, in a chariot paved with love, and the covering thereof was purple? Can you ſay, I ſaw ſomething like a rainbow about the throne of grace, and not only a purple covering over my head, but alſo a purple pavement under my feet; a pleaſant pavement, laid partly with the white marble of the love of God, and partly with the red marble of the blood of Chriſt; and, upon this pavement, laid before me in the goſpel, my heart went

forward to the moſt holy place; and I ſaw that the moſt holy God was a reconciled God in Chriſt, a well-pleaſed God in Chriſt.

3. Have you ſeen that the holy of holies is nothing elſe but a throne of grace, having grace above it, and grace beneath it, and grace round about it; and that, therefore, the moſt holy place is a place meet for you to come to, meet for you to reſt in; for you, unworthy you, that cannot be ſaved any other way but by grace, free grace, venting thro' that blood of Jeſus?

4. Have you ſeen in that holy place, that the promiſes of God are all Yea and Amen in Chriſt; that they are the New Teſtament in his blood; and that, therefore, every promiſe is ſure, being dipt in blood, ſealed with blood, with juſtice-ſatisfying blood; and that, therefore, juſtice requires, as well as mercy, that they be accompliſhed?

2*dly*, What ſanctifying effect hath this acceſs to the moſt holy place had upon you? Do you find yourſelf more ſweetly bound to univerſal holineſs? Why, ſay you, I find myſelf under an obligation to be a moſt holy perſon; becauſe, I think, I have been admitted, in ſome reſpect, to the moſt holy place: but I tremble to think of what you are now to ſay, becauſe I find the lamentable want of holineſs, and cannot think you will give me a mark that will argue my being holy; and therefore fear my acceſs to the holy place, that ſometimes I thought I had, to be but deluſion. I muſt tell you,

1. If you have been in the moſt holy place, and got ſome holy impreſſions there, then ye will ſee yourſelf to be moſt vile; when Job was let in to the moſt holy place, then he cries out, *Behold, I am vile*, chap. xl. 4. It is a ſight of the holy God that makes us to ſee ourſelves to be unholy creatures. You that value yourſelves as good and holy, you have never ſeen a holy God in the face: but thou that hateſt thyſelf, and lotheſt thyſelf as an unholy creature, ſaying, "Truth, Lord, I am a dog: ſo fooliſh I am, and ignorant; I am as a beaſt before *thee*;" thou art a holy perſon.

2. Try your holineſs by a queſtion or two; What is

your

your deſire? Is it, O to be holy! O to be like unto Chriſt! —What is your hope? Do you love to think of getting to heaven, becauſe there you will be like him, by ſeeing him as he is?—What is your delight and love? Can you ſay you love the law, becauſe it is a holy law, and becauſe it is a law of love?—What is your lamentation? Is it, Oh! unholy ſinner that I am? "O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?"—What is your how long? Is it, "O how long ſhall I ſojourn in Meſech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar!"—What is your regard to the law of the houſe? Are you grieved to ſee that it is violate by yourſelf and others?—What is your regard to the members of the houſe? Do you love the ſaints, becauſe they are holy? Some chuſe a drinking club and cabal before the company of the godly that lay them under a reſtraint; but is your delight with the ſaints, the excellent ones of the earth?—Again, what is your regard to the Lord of the houſe? Can you ſay from the bottom of your ſoul, that, however unholy you are, yet you love him becauſe he is holy, and can rejoice in him as a holy God that hates ſin? This is a ſweet mark that you have been in the holy place, and got the print of God's holineſs ſtamped on your ſoul. A hypocrite may love God becauſe he is good and merciful, but I do not think he can love him, becauſe he is a holy God that hates ſin. Is that the language of thy ſoul, "O give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs?"—In a word, what is thy reſolution thro' grace? Is it, that you will endeavour, in his ſtrength, to glorify God by a holy walk, and yet are you feared to reſt on your reſolutions, and therefore turn your reſolutions to prayers, ſaying, "Lord, let thy hand be upon the man of thy right-hand, the Son of man whom thou haſt made ſtrong for thyſelf, and henceforth we will not go back?" After trial, ſee your duty.

My laſt uſe therefore, ſhall be by way of exhortation. 1. To theſe who are without the houſe. 2. To thoſe who have been admitted into the holy place.

1ſt, To you that are without the houſe, that are not members of God's family, but are unbelievers. I ex-

hort you to come into the houſe of God; "For without are dogs," unholy dogs, Rev. xxii. 15. Why, may ſome think, are you calling us to come into the houſe, where there are ſo many diſorders, as you have been mentioning? It is beſt to ſtay without doors: why, man, woman, when I call you to come into the houſe of God, it is, not only to the outer houſe, but to come into the moſt holy place, and to enter into the holieſt by faith; that is, come to God in Chriſt. The outer houſe is only the viſible church, and the viſible glory is indeed much defaced in our day; but there is an inviſible part of the houſe, the moſt holy place, that we call you to come to: not to an outward viſible profeſſion only; not to outward ordinances only; for, by your being within the walls of the houſe, you are ſeemingly come there already: but you may be viſible church-members, and come to ordinances and ſacraments, and yet ſtrangers to God, if you have never come in to the moſt holy place by coming in to God in Chriſt. And, Oh! why ſtand you without doors, contrary to the law of the houſe, inviting all to come in! Rev. xxii. 17. Let me tell you, while you ſtay without doors, you are without hope, and without God in the world; neither fellow citizens with the ſaints, nor of the houſhold of God in a ſpiritual ſenſe: and the viſible outward advantages you enjoy, while you are only in the outer court, will aggravate your condemnation if ye come not in. I muſt tell you, while you are not within the houſe, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, you are not under the law, *The law of the houſe;* I mean, the law of faith and love, but under the law of works, and ſo under the curſe; for, "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." The wrath of God abides on you, while you abide in unbelief, without coming in to the Surety, and cloſing with his law-biding righteouſneſs. While you come not in to the moſt holy place, you remain in a moſt unholy ſtate and way; for, it is this holy place that makes a holy people: Chriſt is the true temple, the holy place, the houſe where God dwells; and how can you ſee God, if you come not to his houſe? How can you ſpeak with *God,* if you come not to his houſe? How can you draw

up

up acquaintance with him, or attain conformity to him? If you do not behold the glory of God in the face of Chriſt, you can never be changed into his image, from glory to glory. Without coming to Chriſt, you ſhall never have holineſs; and without holineſs, you ſhall never ſee God in heaven.

Conſider, O ſinner, The law of the houſe, with reference to you that are without.—It is the law of the houſe, that the door be open for all comers; "Whoſoever will, let him come."—It is the law of the houſe, that all comers ſhall be welcome; "He that cometh, I will in nowiſe caſt out."—It is the law of the houſe, that all that come in ſhall be children of the family; "We are the children of God by faith in Chriſt: Without are dogs," but within are children.—It is the law of the houſe, that no objection be ſuſtained as lawful againſt your coming into Chriſt, or to the moſt holy place; for the law of grace is calculate, of infinite wiſdom, for anſwering every objection: it is not lawful to object any thing againſt coming into the holy place. Fear of God's infinite juſtice is no lawful objection; for, here is a ſacrifice, ſatisfying juſtice. Your great ſin and guilt is no lawful objection; for, here is guilt-expiating blood. Your total want of all good in yourſelf, is no lawful objection; for, here is all fulneſs to ſupply you. Your unworthineſs is no lawful objection; for, the worthineſs of the Lamb is the only thing that is regarded in the moſt holy place. Your poverty is no lawful objection; for, here are the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, both to pay your debts, and bear your charges. Your rags and nakedneſs is no lawful objection; for, here is the robe of righteouſneſs to cover you, that the ſhame of your nakedneſs may not appear. Your fear of God's having ſome ſecret purpoſe againſt you, is no lawful objection, but a horrid thought; for, The law of the houſe makes nothing but God's revealed will your rule. Your weakneſs and inability is no lawful objection; for, "Strength and beauty are in his ſanctuary; ſtrength is within his holy place," to which you are called to come; and drawing power is put in the promiſe, ſuch as that, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me," that you may take his help, and look

to

to his promiſed power and grace. Your unholineſs is no lawful objection; for, you are invited to come to the moſt holy place, that you may be incorporated amongſt the moſt holy people. In a word, diſtance is no lawful objection; for, the moſt holy place is at hand; ſince you cannot go up to the holy of holies, the holy of holies is come down to you: it is on the top of the mountain, and the whole limit thereof round about. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men." And the queſtion is, Do you welcome a Jeſus, that is come to you in the goſpel, to make you holy as well as happy for ever? Can your heart ſay, "Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?" It is one good way of coming to him, to welcome his coming to you. Is there an echo in your heart? When he ſays, Sinner, come thou to me; does your heart ſay, Lord, come thou to me, for I cannot come to thee without I be drawn? When he cries, Come; and you cry, Come; ye are not far from meeting together. Well, ſinner, the door is open, O tarry not till the door be ſhut. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation." Say not, To-morrow, thou fool, leſt this night thy ſoul be required of thee, and then to all eternity you ſhall not have another offer. O may the arm of power accompany the offer of grace, in the evening of a communion-day!

2*dly*, I would cloſe with a word to you that have been, either now or formerly drawn in to the moſt holy place: ſurely it is your duty to be a moſt holy people; for, univerſal holineſs is the law of the houſe; on the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about. I ſhould exhort and direct you in a word.

O Sirs, are you come into the ſanctuary of God? O then, put off your ſhoes; for the place whereon you ſtand is holy ground! Put off your filthy ſhoes, for the room of the houſe you have entered into is a clean room, a holy place; the Lord of the houſe is moſt holy. Holineſs is the name of God; he is the Holy One of Iſrael. Holineſs is the will of God; "This is the will of God, even your ſanctification." Holineſs is the work of God; and, "You are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good *works*." Holineſs is the nature of God; and you are made

made partakers of the divine nature. Holineſs is the glory of God: and he is glorious in holineſs.

Conſider, the houſe of God is a holy houſe, and the church is not God's houſe, but in ſo far as it is holy. His word is a holy word; his ordinances are holy ordinances; his table is a holy table; and, "Holineſs becometh his houſe for ever."

Conſider the beauty of holineſs: the beauty of faces is but ſkin-deep, a rotting beauty; the beauty of clothes and ornaments is but a patch upon a ſore, a ſcreen to cover your nakedneſs; but the beauty of holineſs is what makes a man all glorious within and without. All pleaſure without holineſs is but grief; for the pleaſure of ſin is what man muſt either repent of here, or be damned for hereafter. All profit without holineſs is but loſs; "For what ſhall it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? But godlineſs is great gain." All honour without holineſs will end in ſhame and diſgrace.

Conſider the oppoſite of holineſs, namely, SIN; that ſin is a reproach to any people, much more to ſuch a profeſſing and privileged people as you are. The profane world, that ſee your works, and not your faith, if you be vile, vain, wanton, and profane in your walk, they will ſay, There is your religion; and thus you will bring a reproach upon your holy religion. And who, that ever was admitted to the moſt holy place, would not bluſh and be aſhamed to bring it under ſuch undeſerved reproach.

Conſider what regard is owing to the glory of God, the honour of Chriſt, the work of the holy Spirit, and the credit of our holy religion.

Conſider what is the end of God in all his great works towards you: this is the end of election; "He hath choſen you, that you ſhould be holy:" this is the end of redemption, "That he might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works:" It is the end of ſanctification by the Spirit, that you ſhould be holy.

What is the end and deſign of ordinances, but to be means of holineſs? What is the end of merciful providences, but that you may fear the Lord and his goodneſs?

What

What is the end of croſſing and afflicting providences, but to purge away your droſs, and make you partakers of his holineſs? What is the end of all the graces of the Spirit, if you have the faith of Chriſt, or the hope of glory in him? Why then, faith purifies the heart; and "He that hath this hope, purifies himſelf, even as he is pure."

Conſider what obligations you are under, beyond all perſons in the world, to be the moſt holy people, in the midſt of this unholy age.

All the direction I offer is, See that you be much in the exerciſe of faith, entering again and again into the moſt holy place; for this will, as I ſaid, have both an operative and argumentative, both a phyſical and a moral influence upon your holineſs. When you come to the moſt holy place, and ſee the moſt holy God, you will find yourſelf under the ſtrongeſt obligation to be holy, and ſuch bonds laid upon your heart, as will bind you ſweetly and ſtrictly to holineſs, even the bond of love conſtraining you. In the moſt holy place you will ſee ſomething wonderful, even your ſalvation and juſtification, lying between two everlaſting breaſts, Rom. iii. 24. between the everlaſting grace of God, and the everlaſting righteouſneſs of Chriſt; "Being juſtified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus." And what do you think of ſeeing yourſelf lying, as it were, between theſe two everlaſting breaſts of God; and, at the ſame time, his everlaſting arms holding and embracing you in his boſom? This is the notable ſight of faith to be ſeen in the moſt holy place; and when you come to ſee this great ſight, the warm boſom of God's everlaſting love will give you a warm heart, and will leave a ſtrong impreſſion of the law of love and holineſs upon you. *This is the law of the houſe.* If you get to the top of the mountain with Moſes, O how ſhould your face ſhine, even when ye come down to the bottom of the mount, and go into the company of others round about the mount! Not only a communion-table, but your common tables ſhould be holineſs to the Lord. In every company, in every place, let this be your motto, "Holineſs to the Lord." *This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy: behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

SER-

SERMON LXXXIII.

The LITTLE CITY beſieged and delivered: Or, The Deliverance of the Church by CHRIST, and the Ingratitude of Men to the glorious REDEEMER, repreſented. *

ECCL. ix. 14, 15.

There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king againſt it, and beſieged it, and built great bulwarks againſt it; now, there was found in it a poor wiſe man; and he, by his wiſdom, delivered the city: yet no man remembered the ſame poor man.

IT is queſtioned, amongſt interpreters, whether this be a hiſtory, or a parable: I am not here to diſpute the matter, but take it to be parabolical; and reckon the Spirit of God hath left the application thereof for us to make, which I would eſſay to do, both in an agreeableneſs, I hope to the analogy of faith, and in a ſuitableneſs to the preſent occaſion.

The verſes contain news from heaven; and particularly, 1. Here is a city deſcribed; *There was a little city, and few men within it.* 2. The city beſieged; *There came a great king againſt it, and beſieged it; and built great bulwarks againſt it.* 3. The city delivered, and the ſiege

* This ſermon was preached at the Queensferry, on Monday, Oct. 8th, 1732. after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, there.

raiſed;

raiſed; *Now, there was found in it a poor wiſe man; and he, by his wiſdom, delivered the city.* 4. The ingratitude of the citizens, *Yet no man remembered the ſame poor man.*

1*ſt*, Here is a city deſcribed, both from the quality of it, a little city; and from the paucity of its inhabitants, few men within it. Now, what are we to underſtand by the city? Why,

1. If by the city we underſtand the world in general, it might ſeem ſtrange that the world ſhould be called a little city; but he that walks with God, as Enoch, and as the prophet Iſaiah expreſſeth it, dwells on high, ſees this world to be nothing but ſome ſhadow; yea, before God, "All the nations of the earth are as nothing:" and as it is little, ſo there are few men within it; becauſe theſe we call men cannot, according to ſcripture, be diſtinguiſhed from beaſts and vipers, a generation of vipers; and of theſe there are many: but a very few men are to be found in the world; none but theſe that are tranſformed, and turned from beaſts to men; "The beaſts of the field ſhall honour me, the dragon and the owl. This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe, Iſa. xlvi. 20, 21.

2. By the city we are to underſtand the church of God in particular. The name of the city is JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, the Lord is there; the wall of the city is *ſalvation*, which God hath appointed for walls and bulwarks: the food of the citizens is the word of God, and the bread that came down from heaven. But in what reſpect the church is compared to a city, ſo frequently in ſcripture, we may afterwards conſider. It is but a little city, and a few men in it, in compariſon of her enemies, and all the reſt of the world, that are without the church.

2*dly*, Here is the city beſieged. Where we may notice,

1. The greatneſs of the beſieger; *There came a* GREAT KING *againſt it, and beſieged it.* Whether we take this great king for God, in one reſpect; or for the devil, in another reſpect; and for ſin and death that attend him, theſe, in various reſpects, lay ſiege to the city.

2. Notice the greatneſs of the ſiege; *He built great*

bulwarks

bulwarks againſt it. God, in his awful juſtice; the devil, in his deſperate malice; ſin, in its deſtructive ſubtilty; and death, in its dreadful terrors. A great king raiſing great bulwarks againſt a little city, and few men in it, they muſt be in a very diſmal ſituation. But,

3*dly*, Here is the little city delivered, and the ſiege raiſed; *There was found in the city a poor wiſe man; and he, by his wiſdom,* DELIVERED *the city.* Where notice alſo two things, namely, How the deliverer is deſcribed; and how the city was delivered by him.

(1.) How the deliverer is deſcribed; *There was found in the city a* POOR WISE MAN. I think it is not only highly agreeable to the analogy of faith, but very probable to be the intent of the words, to give a deſcription of Chriſt, the Deliverer and Saviour of his church; whom we may here view as deſcribed,

1. By his humanity, a MAN; for, "He was a man of ſorrows: The Word was made fleſh."

2. By his divinity, a WISE man: for, he was, and is, the eſſential Wiſdom of God.

3. By his humiliation; a POOR man: for, "Tho' he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor."

4. By his deſtination to this work; he was FOUND in the city: Who found him? God, who ſays, "I have found a ranſom; I have found David my ſervant." Where was he found? Even in the city among men: "I have laid help upon One that is mighty, ſays God; even One choſen out of the people," Pſal. lxxxix. 19.

(2.) How and in what manner he delivered the city, even by his WISDOM; *He by his wiſdom delivered the city:* By his Deity; for, if he had not been the infinitely wiſe God, he could never have relieved the city; even he who, by his wiſdom, ſtretched out the heavens, when he made the world; by his wiſdom, fulfilled the law, and appeaſed the wrath of God; by his wiſdom, outwitted the old ſerpent, and deſtroyed the works of the devil; by his wiſdom, finiſhed tranſgreſſion and made an end of ſin, and vanquiſhed death: and ſo by his wiſdom delivered the city from juſtice, Satan, ſin, hell, and death; in his wiſdom he delivers the church, the city of God, by

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the price of his blood, and by the power of his Spirit.—Thus the city is delivered, and the ſiege raiſed.

4*thly*, And laſtly, Notice in the words the ingratitude of the citizens: or the citizens upbraided for their unkindneſs; *Yet* NO MAN *remembered the ſame poor man.* Where you have,

1. The nature of their fault, and the aggravation of their ingratitude; they were ſo far from requiting him kindly, ſaying, "What ſhall we render to the Lord, for his benefits towards us?" that they did not remember him: they never ſo much as minded him. Their diſeaſe was that of ſinful oblivion; they forgot him, and his kindneſs: "They ſoon forgot his mighty works."

2. The univerſality of this ingratitude, NO *man remembered the ſame poor man;* none remembered, no not one: they are altogether become ungrateful.—Thus you have the hiſtory opened, and a ſhort hint at the myſtery contained in it.

From the words, thus opened, we may lay down this doctrinal propoſition.

OBSERV. That though the work of redemption, or the deliverance wrought by Chriſt for ſinners, be a very great and memorable work, like the raiſing of a great ſiege againſt a little city; yet there is a proneneſs in man to forget the Redeemer or Deliverer, and all his work of kindneſs toward them.

We need go no further for the confirmation of this doctrine, than the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper, which you have been celebrating, "Do this in remembrance of me;" as if it had been ſaid, Ought you not to remember me, your Redeemer; me, your Deliverer, that hath raiſed the great ſiege that was laid againſt you; yet you are prone to forget me, and all the kindneſs that I have done to you; therefore, I have inſtituted this ordinance to keep you in mind, "Do this in remembrance of me." But I ſhall refer the farther confirmation, to the proſecution of the doctrine, in the following method, according to the former diviſion.

I. I would

I. I would ſpeak ſomewhat concerning the little city, and the few men in it.
II. Concerning the great ſiege laid againſt it.
III. Of the deliverance thereof, and the reaſons of the ſiege.
IV. Of the ingratitude of the citizens; and their proneneſs to forget the Deliverer.
V. Make application of the whole.

I. I am to ſpeak of the little city; *There was a little city, and few men within it.* There are four things remarkable concerning the church, which this part of the text preſents to us.

Remark 1. "That the church of God is comparable "to a city, and often compared thereto in ſcripture, "Pſal. xlvi. 4. "There is a river, the ſtreams whereof "make glad the city of God *." The church, in alluſion to a city, is a place of ſecurity and defence; "We have a ſtrong city, ſalvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks:" and it hath watchmen upon the walls. It is a place of ſociety; where the ſaints have fellowſhip one with another, exhort and comfort one another. It is a place of unity; where they are to maintain the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.—It is a place of trade and traffick; where we may trade with heaven, and buy gold tried in the fire; white raiment, and eye-ſalve expoſed freely there to ſale.—It is a place of freedom and liberty; where all the true citizens are freed from the law, as a covenant; from the curſe of the law, the wrath of God, and all ſubjection thereto; alſo from the guilt of ſin, and the rule of it.—It is a place of order and regularity; where men are regularly entered burgeſſes, and are to come in by the gate of the city, even by Chriſt, who is the door.—It is a place of reſt, commodious to live in; and there is no reſting-place for the ſoul but here.—It is a place of pleaſure and joy; "Beautiful for ſituation, the joy of the whole earth." There is the joyful ſound, thro'

* See the Author's ſermon on this text, Vol. VII. Sermon 108. where he, at length, ſtates the compariſon, and runs the parallel, between the church and a city.

the ſilver trumpet of the goſpel; and the ſong of Zion. —It is a place of pomp and ſplendor, the ſeat of the King; where is the King's court, the King's throne, the throne of grace, and daily acceſs to ſee the King in his beauty. —It is a place of privileges, a privileged place; where there are privileges belonging to the church viſible; they have the fountain open to them; they have a ſealed right in baptiſm to the covenant; having the promiſe, they have right to the ſeal of the covenant of promiſe; and thus a ſealed warrant to come to Chriſt, a general adoption, and thereon many fatherly acts of pity ſhewed to them; God inſtructs them, by his word; corrects them, by his rod; reproves them, by his ſervants; and, when they go aſide, directs them, by his word, ſaying, "This is the way." They have ordinances, ſacraments, miniſters, and a right to chooſe the miniſters and officers of the city: this is the privilege of every city, much more of the city of God; and if the city want this, it is ſo far a city robbed and ſpoiled.—There are privileges belonging to the church inviſible; ſuch as, pardon of ſin, peace with God, ſanctification, eternal life, acceſs to the King's table, the Lamb, the light of the place, and the temple; the Lord himſelf is the temple they come to; they have a title unto the new Jeruſalem, the King's paſs for heaven; "I appoint unto you a kingdom."

Remark 2. "That the church is a little city, it is a "little flock, Luke xii. 31. It is but a ſmall ſpot, com- "pared with the vaſt wilderneſs of this world; it is an "incloſed garden, Song iv. 12." The church is compared to a little city, in compariſon of this world; and but a little city in the eyes of the world; little and contemned. And indeed, the true citizens are but little in their own eyes; "Leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints; leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints; leſs than the leaſt of all God's mercies;" yea nothing in their own account and leſs than nothing, worſe than nothing. The church is a little city; a little ſtone cut out of the mountain; yet many great cities and kingdoms have fallen before it. This little city has outlived the great city Nineveh; the magnificent Tyrus; and trampled upon the graves of many famous

famous and remarkable cities, becauſe tho' it be a little city, yet it is the city of the great God; and, "Glorious things are ſpoken of this city of God," Pſal. lxxxvii. 3.

Remark 3. "That it is a city of men; a *little city and* "MEN *in it.*" The infinite wiſdom of God hath ſeen fit to make this famous little city conſiſt, not of fallen angels, but of fallen men; "Wiſdom crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, ſaying, To you, O men do I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men," Prov. viii. 3, 4. And happy we the men whom wiſdom determineth and prevaileth on to enter themſelves burgeſſes of this little city, by coming not only into the ſuburbs thereof, by a profeſſion of Chriſt; but enter in through the gates into the city, while the King of the city ſtands at the door of our hearts, and knocks, and aſſures us that he is the door of the city; "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved; and ſhall go in and out, and find paſture," John x. 9. It is a city of men, a city for mankind, a city of refuge for mankind ſinners; therefore, let none ſtand without, ſaying, It is not the like of me that God is calling to come in. If you be of the poſterity of Adam, and of the children of men, Chriſt is offered unto you, and you are called to accept of the grant of freedom and liberty; the grant of all the privileges and immunities of God's city, and of being free men there: O Sirs, "If the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed." But yet we have it to remark,

4. "That this little city hath but few men in it, even "the viſible church." I mean, theſe that have a viſible and credible profeſſion of faith are few in compariſon of the reſt of the world; and the inviſible church, who have the power of religion, and the truth of faith, are but very few in compariſon of the bulk of profeſſors. This little city then, has but a *few men within it*, as the text ſays; many are without the city, and many are about the city, but few are within the city, and they only, are ſafe; for, "Without are dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, idolaters, murderers, and whoſoever loveth or maketh a lye," Rev. xxii 15. Without are drunkards, ſwearers, ſabbath-breakers, profane perſons; yea, beſide the openly profane, without are formaliſts, hypocrites,

crites, unbelievers: but within are ſaints, believers, lovers of God; "Many are called, but few are choſen." Yea we may ſay, there are many bycomers, but few indwellers; many incomers, like dogs, that go out again; "They go out from us, becauſe they are not of us," 1 John ii. 19. but few indwellers, like children of Zion, and fellow-citizens with the ſaints, Eph. ii. 19. The reſt of the world, whether they be bycomers or not, they are not to be reckoned men, but rather dogs and beaſts; for thus, all that are out of Chriſt, and ſo out of the city, are called, Iſa. xliii. 20. Thus, in the vaſt populous city of Jeruſalem, a man could not be found; "Run ye to and fro thro' the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, and ſee now, and know, and ſeek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man." Why, not a man? No: they were only to be reckoned men who execute judgment, and ſought the truth; but ſuch could not be found: they were all degenerate into beaſts; all transformed thro' brutiſh affections into unreaſonable creatures: yet of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, "This man and that man was born there;" but they are but here and there one; a *little city, and few men within it.*

II. The ſecond thing in the method, was, To ſpeak of the great ſiege laid againſt the little city.

I ſhall here conſider both who the great king is, that came againſt the city; and what are the great bulwarks built againſt it. And here, according to the view I gave in the explication,

1. By the great king we may underſtand the Great God, in his awful juſtice, who upon the ſin of man, became an enraged enemy to the whole city of mankind; and to whoſe wrath the little city, which he choſe out of the world, is by nature as much expoſed as the reſt; for, being all children of diſobedience they are by nature children of wrath even as others, Eph. ii. 2, 3. and therefore, his firſt appearance to them, even when he has a mind to make them a city for himſelf to dwell in; his firſt appearance, I ſay, to them, is in terrible majeſty, laying ſiege to their ſouls, and building great bulwarks againſt them. But poſſibly you may ſay,

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What bulwarks? Even the great bulwarks of law-curſes and law-threatenings: for, in a work of conviction and compunction, and legal humiliation, which uſually precedes any goſpel-work, and ſaving change, he applies the curſe and threatenings of the law to their conſcience, ſaying, "Curſed is every one that continues not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. In ſo much, that the ſoul finds itſelf to be an accurſed creature, a condemned creature; and is put in fear of everlaſting damnation. The reſt of the world, who ſhall eternally feel this heavy wrath of God in another world, yet ly ſleeping without fear of it, in this world; but the little city, that ſhall for ever be delivered from it, are now in this world awakened and alarmed with the fear of it mercifully, that they may prize the Saviour and Deliverer of the city. The great God ſtorms the city with his terrible artillery, like great warring cannons, furrounding a little city; he thunders from Sinai, and builds great bulwarks againſt it: the great bulwark of a broken law; the great bulwark of a threatened curſe; the great bulwark of offended holineſs; and great bulwark of enraged juſtice: and, in a word, all the infinite perfections of God injured and diſhonoured by their ſin, appear planted about the city in battle array. When the great God himſelf appears an enemy, breaking them with breach upon breach, and running upon them like a giant ſometimes, and ſaying, as Deut. xxxii. 40. "Who can deliver out of my hand? for, I lift up my hand to heaven, and ſay, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering ſword, and my hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies;—I will make mine arrows drunk with blood." Yea, not only in the firſt awakening-work doth God thus appear formidable to them, for their humiliation and conviction; but even afterwards, he ſometimes appears formidable to them for their trial and correction. Thus Job found the great bulwarks of God's terrible majeſty built up againſt him, when he ſaid, chap. vi. 4. "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poiſon whereof drinketh up my ſpirits; the terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt me." Thus Heman, "While I ſuffer thy ter-

rors, I am diſtracted: thy fierce wrath goes over me; thy terrors have cut me off," Pſal. lxxxviii. 15. But,

2. By the great king we may underſtand the devil in his deſperate malice againſt the little city: he is called a prince, the prince of the power of the air, [or, of darkneſs,] that rules in the hearts of the children of diſobedience, Eph. ii. 2. This mighty and malicious prince, in the beginning of the world, came againſt the little city of mankind, when there was but few men in it; yea, when there was but one man, and one woman, in the city, in a literal ſenſe; and he beſieged it, and built great bulwarks of flattering falſhoods, and lying temptations againſt it; and conquered the city, and deſtroyed it; as you read, Gen. iii. concerning the ſin and fall of our firſt parents, through the powerful ſubtilty of the ſerpent: and he continues ſtill to beſiege and deſtroy ſinners by his malice and ſubtilty, force, and fraud; and eſpecially he raiſes great bulwarks againſt the little city.

What bulwarks? Why, even his manifold temptations, devices, and fiery darts; "We are not ignorant of his devices," 2 Cor. ii. 11. We are called to take, above all things, the ſhield of faith, that we may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; for, "We wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities and powers," Eph. vi. 12. 16. The devil attacks the city both by high bulwarks and deep mines; we read of the depths of Satan, Rev. ii. 24. and being the prince of this world; for ſo he is called, John xii. 31. and elſewhere. He has thouſands of wicked inſtruments by which he batters and beſieges the little city. He has a deceitful party for him within, as well as without the little city; within the church, as well as without it: within the church viſible, he has his treacherous Judaſes, to betray the city into his hand, and to betray the intereſt of the city, and the liberties and privileges thereof. We read of the devil's armour, Luke xi. 22. where he is called the ſtrong man armed, keeping his palace; but when a ſtronger than he, comes upon him, and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armour. And what *that* armour is, we may partly know, from 2 Cor. iv. 4.

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"The god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not," helliſh darkneſs excluding and oppoſing goſpel-light: the darkneſs of ignorance, the darkneſs of error, and the darkneſs of deluſion. This is a great part of the devil's armour, together with high imaginations, carnal reaſonings, pride, prejudices, and exalting thoughts, mentioned, 2 Cor. x. 5. Theſe are part of his armour and his great bulwarks.

3. By the great king we may underſtand ſin; ſin is the great king that reigns in, and over us naturally; therefore ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vi. 12. "Let not ſin reign in your mortal bodies." Sin and Satan are always confederates together; and their power is very great, in ſo much, that all men are ſubject to the rule and government thereof; and as all the children of men are ſlaves unto ſin, as their king; ſo all the children of God, in this world, are many times captives to it; "I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin that is in my members," Rom. vii. 3. The power and authority of ſin is called a law, even the law of ſin and death, which nothing can free us from, but the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, Rom. viii. 2.

Now, what bulwarks doth this great king build againſt the little city? Indeed, ſin has the ſtrongeſt bulwarks in the world.—It hath ſelf for a bulwark; and hence, for a man to deſtroy ſin, is to deſtroy himſelf in effect, and the beſt and moſt uſeful parts of himſelf, his right-hand, his right-eye, his members, Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth.* When a man deſtroys his luſts, he denies himſelf. And ſelf is ſo mighty, that it competes with King Jeſus, and fights for the throne, even after Chriſt has taken poſſeſſion of the heart. Self-eaſe, ſelf-pleaſure, ſelf-will, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-love, ſelf-eſteem, ſelf-righteouſneſs, are the bulwarks of ſin.—It hath alſo the law for a bulwark; "The ſtrength of ſin is the law," 1 Cor. xv. 56. The law of ſin is ſtrengthened by the law of works; the ſtrength of ſin being a grand part of the curſe of the law of works, in ſo much, that no power can deſtroy that bulwark, but the power that can give full ſatisfaction to the law; hence the ſtrong

bulwark of ſin is never broken down, till a man has, by faith, cloſed with the law-ſatisfying righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Again,

4. By the great king we may underſtand death, the king of terrors, Job xviii. 14. Death is a mighty king that all the ſinful race of Adam are lawful captives unto; and ſuch is the conſtant battle that death gives, even to the true-born children of Zion, the little city, that when all other enemies are defeated and deſtroyed, death is the laſt upon the field; "The laſt enemy to be deſtroyed, is death," 1 Cor. xv. 26. Now,

What bulwarks does this king build againſt the little city? There are two great bulwarks it builds; the one before, and the other behind it. Before death, there ſtands the bulwark of terror and fear, becauſe of ſin, which is the ſting of death; and hence many within the little city, are kept long in bondage thro' fear of death, Heb. ii. 15. The terrors of death ſometimes compaſs them about, and the fears of hell on the back of death. Again, behind death, there is another bulwark, and that is ſeeming victory. When death gets ſoul and body ſeparate, and the body made death's priſoner in the grave, where the worms deſtroy it, and rotteneſs ſeems to ride in triumph over it: and this is the reaſon why it is ſaid to be the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed; becauſe it has a ſeeming victory over the viſible part of the believer, till the laſt trumpet ſound, and the dead be raiſed incorruptible, immortal, &c.

III. The next thing was, To ſpeak of the deliverance of the city, and the raiſing of the ſiege. And here we are led, by the text, to conſider, 1. How the Deliverer is deſcribed. 2. How the deliverance is effected.

1ſt, Conſider how the Deliverer is deſcribed; *There was found in the city, a poor wiſe man.* And here he is ſet before us, ſo as we may conſider him,

1. In his humanity, as a *Man*. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the glorious Saviour and Deliverer, he was a man; he was propheſied of before, that he ſhould be the ſeed of the woman; the ſeed of Abraham; and in the fulneſs of *time* he was made of a woman; born of a virgin;

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The Word was made flesh: and he became man, a true man; he went through all the ſtages of man, conception, childhood, youth, riper age: he was a diſtreſſed man, *A man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief.* He was a mortal as we are, and actually died as we muſt; he died a painful, ſhameful and ignominious death, which we were commemorating at this occaſion.

2. We may conſider the Deliverer in his Divinity; as a *wiſe Man.* Wiſdom dwells not with fallen men; they had all their heads cracked by the fall of Adam, and were become fools, having folly bound up in their nature: therefore the man, who is the Deliverer, muſt be a man that never fell in Adam; a wiſe man; that is, God as well as man: one that, with the nature of man, hath the wiſdom of God; yea, and is *the Wiſdom of God,* 1 Cor. i. 24. It is he that ſays, *I, Wiſdom, dwell with Prudence,* Prov. viii. 12. And it is of him the Father ſays, *My Servant ſhall deal prudently,* Iſa. lii. 13. And it is by his infinite wiſdom that he delivered the city; of which more afterwards. He is eſſentially wiſe, being Wiſdom itſelf; the God whoſe underſtanding is infinite. He is communicatively wiſe, having all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge hid in him, and the Spirit of wiſdom to give.

3. We may view the Deliverer in his humiliation, as a *poor Man;* poor in outward reſpects: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that tho' he was rich, yet, for our ſakes, he became poor; that we thro' his poverty might be rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. He had all the riches, and all the fulneſs of the Godhead in him, yet he became poor. Many are poor againſt their will, but he became poor voluntarily: he became a poor ſervant; "Though he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he took upon him the form of a ſervant;" taking on our nature, not in its beſt condition, but the loweſt ſtate of our nature. He became poor in his birth, poor in his life, and poor in his death. He was born, not of a queen, but of a mean virgin; born, not in a palace, but in a ſtable, laid in a manger; "The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had neſts; but the Son of man had not where to lay his head." He had nothing to pay tribute withal

withal till he ordered a fiſh to bring it. He was miniſtered unto, in his life and in his death, by reaſon of his real extreme poverty. He was poor as a man, and yet wiſe as God. The poverty of men, and the wiſdom of God met and centered in him.

4. We may conſider the Deliverer in his deſtination to this work; he was *found in the city.* He was found of God, who ſays, "I have found a Ranſom; I have found David my ſervant," Job xiii. 24. Pſal. lxxxix. 20. He was found in the city, among men; and was choſen out of the people, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. He was found in faſhion as a man, Phil. ii. 8. He was found willing and chearfully ready to undertake this work of redemption and deliverance, Pſalm xl. 6. Heb. x. 6. "Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will." He was found able and well qualified for the work, Pſalm lxxxix. 19. "I have laid help upon One that is mighty." And as he had a perſonal fitneſs, being God as well as man, and God-man in one perſon; ſo he that found him did alſo fit him, by the ſupereminent unction of the Holy Ghoſt, Pſ. lxxxix. 20. "I have found David my ſervant, with my holy oil have I anointed him." Thus, "Him hath God the Father ſealed," for this work, John vi. 27. And this is what Chriſt acknowledges of himſelf, Iſa. lxi. 1. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God;" to deliver the city.

2*dly*, How the deliverance is effected. Here two things are to be a little opened, 1. The matter of his work; *He delivered the city.* 2. The manner of the deliverance; *By his wiſdom.*

[1.] In general, the matter of his redemption-work, He delivered the little city, he raiſed the ſiege. Here we are to view how he manages the work, in oppoſition to the great kings, that built great bulwarks againſt the little city.

1. If we view the ſiege as formed by the Great King; that is, the Great God, when the great bulwarks built *againſt* the city are, the broken law of God, curſing the

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ſinner; and the injured attributes of God, *viz.* juſtice, holineſs, and truth, all ſtanding in battle array againſt the ſinner, behold, the poor wiſe man, he comes and fulfils that law that we had broken, and bears the curſe that we had incurred. "When the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," Gal. vi. 4. "Chriſt has redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us," Gal. iii. 13. And, in this way, he ſatisfies the juſtice of God, vindicates the holineſs of God, and clears the truth of God; Chriſt hath loved us, and hath given himſelf a ſacrifice for us, of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour to God, Eph. v. 2. He is become the Lord our righteouſneſs; and the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believes: and in him mercy and truth have met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other, that God might ſave, and ſhew mercy on the little city, in a conſiſtency with the honour of his injured attributes, which are now glorified more by his obedience and ſatisfaction than ever they were diſhonoured by our ſin and rebellion. Thus he brake down the great bulwarks that the great King of heaven and earth had built againſt the little city, and that by the King's order and allowance, and according to his command and will; "This commandment have I received of my Father."

2. If we view the ſiege as formed by the devil, the great king of hell, and prince of the power of darkneſs, that rules in the hearts of the children of diſobedience, we will find him raiſing this ſiege partly by the price of his blood, that he ſhed for us; and partly by the power of his Spirit, which is given to us.—By the price of his blood he delivers from the devil's kingdom; for, "By death he deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Heb. xi. 14. And, "For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil," 1 John iii. 8. And he was thus manifeſted, according to the original promiſe, Gen. iii. 15. "The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent." Chriſt took a wooden croſs, as it were, a tree in his arms, and therewith beat down the great bulwarks that Satan built againſt the little city. As by means of a tree the devil built

built his battering engine; ſo, by means of a tree, Chriſt demoliſhed his building. For, upon the croſs, "Jeſus Chriſt ſpoiled principalities and powers, and made a ſhow of them openly, triumphing over them in it," Col. iv. 15. Again, by the power of his Spirit he deſtroyed the devil's bulwarks, when he gives ſpiritual armour to the citizens, the ſhield of faith, and the ſword of the Spirit, and the reſt of that ſpiritual artillery, mentioned, Eph. vi. 11,—17. Whereby they quench the fiery darts of the devil, demoliſh his bulwarks, reſiſt the devil, and overcome by the power and ſtrength of the Captain of their ſalvation. Though they conſtantly fight while here; yet they gradually defeat the devil and his inſtruments, that oppoſe themſelves to Chriſt and his people, to his cauſe and intereſt. Truth prevails always at laſt; and the friends of truth overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony, Rev. xii. 11.

3. If we view the ſiege as formed by the great king, Sin, which naturally reigns in our mortal bodies. How doth the poor wife man deſtroy the great bulwarks thereof? Why, this he doth, both meritoriouſly, giving himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, John i. 29. "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſin of the world." Heb. ix. 26. "But now once in the end of the world, has he appeared to put away ſin, by the ſacrifice of himſelf." And then he doth it efficaciouſly, and that, partly by the actual imputation of his righteouſneſs, for removing the guilt of ſin in juſtification; and partly by the effectual operation of his Spirit, for removing the rule of ſin in ſanctification.—In juſtification, he deſtroys the legal power of ſin; for, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law:* but when the righteouſneſs of God is imputed and received, and Chriſt is become the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to the perſon, then the law, being ſatisfied, has no more power to keep the perſon under the curſe, whereof the power of ſin is the leading part.—And, again, in ſanctification, he deſtroys the actual reigning power of ſin. Both theſe are imported, I think, in that word, Rom. viii. 2. "The law of the Spirit of life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death:" and both are particularly ſpoken of, in verſes 3, 4. "For what the law could

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not do, in that it was weak, thro' the flesh, God [did] sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here is the legal power of sin destroyed: and ver. 13. "If ye, thro' the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live;" there is the destroying of the actual reigning power of sin. Thus, by his pardoning and purifying grace, he demolishes the bulwarks of sin, and all by the means of the gospel, as it is the power of God to salvation; "The weapons of this warfare being not carnal, but mighty, thro' God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Again,

4. If we view the siege as formed by the great king, Death, behold, our King, Jesus, *the poor wise Man*, delivers the city, by overturning the great bulwarks that death built: and this he doth by removing both the sting of death and the victory of the grave; *The sting of death is sin*, which he removes, as I have been just now saying, both meritoriously and efficaciously, till it be perfectly removed in glory, where we shall be like him, by seeing him as he is. The victory of the grave, which is corruption; the corruption of the body, he is to remove at the great day, "When this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality: And that saying shall be brought to pass, Death is swallowed up in victory." Hence in the faith of all this, the believer may sing that triumphant song, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, that has given us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. xv. 54,—57.—Thus you have a view of the deliverance in the matter of it. But then,

[2.] In particular, we are led here to consider the manner of it. It was in infinite wisdom; *He, by his infinite wisdom delivered the city*. As it is said of his works of creation, *In wisdom hath he made them all*; so of his

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work of redemption, " In wiſdom hath he delivered the city. He made the earth by the word of his power, eſtabliſhed the world by his wiſdom, and ſtretched out the heavens by his diſcretion," Jer. x. 12. And it is even he who, by his wiſdom, delivered the city. Particularly,

1. By his wiſdom he removed all the impediments that ſtood in the way of our ſalvation, while he gave himſelf a ranſom for many, ſatisfied the law and juſtice of God, defeated the devil, deſtroyed ſin, and conquered death. And thus, except one great King, whom he brings to peace and reconciliation with the city, he deſtroyed all the other great kings, and their great bulwarks, in ſo much that we may ſay, " He ſmote great kings, for his mercy endureth for ever; and ſlew famous kings, for his mercy endureth for ever!" O the infinite wiſe Captain of ſalvation, who could, by his wiſdom, deliver a little city, ſo powerfully beſieged!

2. By his wiſdom he united the moſt diſtant and contrary extremes, while God and man are joined in one perſon: The infinite and eternal God, with a bit of clay; which is a myſtery ten thouſand times greater than if an angel had become a worm. He became a poor man, that he might deliver the poor city: " Great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God made manifeſt in the fleſh."

3. By his wiſdom he united the moſt contrary intereſts, God's intereſt, and man's: the intereſt of his glory, and our ſalvation; they are quite different, after the fall. In ſome reſpects (when man came to have no other intereſt but that of the devil) God's intereſt and glory ſeemed to require man's deſtruction; and yet it was man's intereſt to be delivered: God's intereſt, in infinite wiſdom, is made to agree with the intereſt of the little city, while Chriſt is ſet forth to be a propitiation, that the glory of God's juſtice and righteouſneſs might be reached, as much in ſaving the city, as it can be by deſtroying them who are without the city, and more.

4. By his wiſdom he united the moſt contrary affections, namely, God's hatred and love; his hatred of ſin, and his love to the ſinner. Nothing more hateful to God than ſin, and yet nothing more dear to God than the

the ſinner that is in Chriſt, in whom God is well-pleaſed. Infinite wiſdom contrived the reconciliation of the oppoſite-like affection in God, that the city might be delivered by the wiſdom of God in a myſtery; the manifold wiſdom of God.

5. By his wiſdom he brings about the greateſt things by the moſt unlikely means. In delivering the city, who would have thought that the ſeed of a poor woman, that was deceived, ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent, the deceiver; that a poor woman ſhould bring forth a poor man child; and poor man ſhould conquer all the armed legions of hell; and that by his ſtripes we ſhould be healed; and by his blood we ſhould be waſhed; and this blood ſhould ſap the the foundations of all the great bulwarks that were raiſed againſt the little city?

6. By his wiſdom he brings the greateſt good out of the greateſt evil. Could there be any thing worſe than ſin? Yet out of this, wiſdom brings greater glory to God, and greater happineſs to man. God had built the fabric of the old covenant with brick, as it were; the devil and our firſt parents pulled it down. But, ſays God, I will build with cedar; and all the devils in hell ſhall not bring it down: "Mercy ſhall be built up for ever," Pſal. lxxxix. 2. O here is wiſdom! And we may ſay, "To the King eternal, immortal, the only wiſe God, be glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen," 1 Tim. i. 17.

IV. The fourth general head propoſed, was, To ſpeak of the ingratitude of the citizens, their proneneſs to forget their deliverer; *Yet no man remembered the ſame poor man.* This is the ſin that God has challenged in his church many times, Deut. xxxii. 18. "Of the rock that begat thee, thou haſt been unmindful, and haſt forgotten God that formed thee. Pſal. cvi. 21. They forgot God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt. They ſoon forgot his work."

I might here ſpeak a little to theſe four things. 1. Of the nature of their unmindfulneſs or forgetfulneſs. 2. The object thereof: they forgot the POOR *wiſe man*, and his work. The univerſality of this oblivion, NO man re-

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membered the ſame poor man. 4. The reaſon of this forgetfulneſs.

1. We are firſt to view the nature of this oblivion. For underſtanding thereof you would know, that forgetfulneſs of Chriſt is either total or partial. A total forgetfulneſs takes place in the wicked, of whom it is ſaid, *God is not in all their thoughts.* A partial forgetfulneſs is coincident to believers themſelves, who may, in a great meaſure, forget what God hath done to their ſouls. Actual forgetfulneſs is what the godly may be guilty of, as David after his groſs ſin of adultery, when he was contriving the murder of Uriah. But there is an habitual forgetfulneſs peculiar to the wicked, who deſire not the knowledge of God; and never remember God, till they be driven to it with a vengeance, as it is ſaid of theſe, "When he ſlew them, then they ſought him; they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer," They never remember till God bring a mortal ſtroke.—But now, this forgetfulneſs imports the want of a ſpiritual view and diſcovery of God; and the want of that lively impreſſion of him which the right view of him doth require. We cannot rightly remember God, if we ſee not his perfections ſhining in his work, as David did, when he ſays of God's works, "In wiſdom haſt thou made them all." When we ſee the wiſdom and power, and other attributes of God, ſhining in his works, particularly in his delivering the little city, the church, then and not till then, do we rightly remember them; and when we ſee his great end in all is the glory of theſe perfections, and entertain due impreſſions hereof ſo as to remember not only in a ſpeculative, but in a practical and appropriating manner; and when we remember his delivering us, in particular from the power and policy of the great things that were againſt us, and render to him the praiſe due to his name.

2. The object of this forgetfulneſs: *No man remembered the ſame* POOR WISE MAN. We are apt, and naturally prone to forget our Creator, to forget our Redeemer, and Saviour, and Protector, and Benefactor, our beſt Friend.—We forget the Deliverer himſelf, the poor *wiſe man* found in the city. We forget his humanity, that

that he is a man; his divinity, that he is the wiſdom of God; his humiliation and poverty, that for our ſakes he became poor; and his deſtination to this redemption-work; all is forgotten. We forget all the deliverances he hath wrought, the redemption he hath accompliſhed.—We forget his works of creation, though yet the heavens declare his glory.—We forget his works of providence, both proſperous and adverſe; both ordinary and extraordinary, as Iſrael did, of whom it is ſaid, "Jeſhurun waxed fat and kicked: he forgot God that made him, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of his ſalvation." They forget the plagues of Egypt; the drowning of the Egyptians; the ſolemn appearance of God on Sinai, when the hill trembled under the weight of God; and the flames aſcended to the middle heaven.—We forget his work of redemption. He redeems from the fury of juſtice, the curſe of the law, the bondage of ſin, the ſlavery of Satan, the ſting of death; from the wrath of God; that terrible wrath, that intolerable wrath, that interminable wrath, that powerful and eternal wrath, that ever-coming wrath; he delivers from the wrath to come: and yet we are apt to forget the Deliverer, and the deliverance: We forget this redemption, and the neceſſity of it; the ſufficiency of it; the excellency of it; the efficacy of it; the fulneſs of it; the acceptableneſs of it; all is forgotten. —We forget alſo his work of regeneration, the work of conviction, and humiliation; the work of converſion, and ſanctification. Though this work of grace effectuates a real change, a ſenſible change, an univerſal change; yet all may be forgotten, in ſo much, that we may poſe the believer himſelf, have you a regeneration-frame, the ſame temper of ſpirit you had in the day of believing? "Where is the kindneſs of thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals?"—Yea, communications and manifeſtations, and communion-experiences may all be fearfully forgotten.

3. The univerſality of this oblivion; NO MAN *remembered the ſame poor man.* That this unbelieving forgetfulneſs of Chriſt, the Redeemer, is univerſal, appears evident from two arguments.

(1.) From the inſtances of all ages of the world.—

The firſt man that ever was, began his apoſtacy from God by his ſin; he forgot the favour of God in giving him ſuch an excellent being, and ſuch excellent benefits; forgot the covenant that God entered into with him, forbidding him to eat of the tree, that was in the midſt of the garden upon peril of eternal ruin to himſelf and his poſterity; yet the hiſſing of the ſerpent drove all out of his mind.—How quickly did Noah forget the great deliverance from the deluge, when all the reſt of the world was overwhelmed in the midſt of the waters; he was no ſooner ſaved from water, than he was drowned in wine.—How quickly did Lot forget the deliverance from the flames of Sodom, and fell into the fire of luſt.—Solomon forgot the God that appeared to him thrice, and turned to idolatry.—David quickly forgot the Lord's delivering him from Saul, and fell into the ſin of adultery and murder. Iſrael forgot God and all his works of wonder.—The ten lepers, all but one, forgot to return and give praiſe to God that healed them.—The diſciples of Chriſt, quickly forgot the miracles of the loaves; they got ſweet communion with Chriſt, yet Judas and his party ſoon drove all out of their minds. *No man remembered the poor wiſe man.*

(2.) It appears from the many remembrancers and memorials that the Lord Jeſus has ſet up of himſelf, and his works, as preſervatives againſt this forgetting him. God's works of creation are his remembrancers, while the heavens declare his glory.—God's works of providence are his remembrancers. "He hath not left himſelf without a witneſs," even among the heathen, giving them rain and fruitful ſeaſons: every drop of rain is a memorial of God. God's ordinances are his remembrancers; why has he given us Sabbaths and ſacraments, but to be memorials of the works of Chriſt, and the death of Chriſt? *Do this in remembrance of me.* In a word, the Holy Ghoſt is given to be a remembrancer, John xiv. 26. "I will give the Comforter, and he ſhall bring all things to your remembrance." I have been long preaching among you, might Chriſt ſay, and given you many a ſermon; but all is gone, you forgot all; therefore, I will ſend the Holy Ghoſt to be your remembrancer.—Theſe things evi-

evidence the univerſality of this ſin: *No man remembered the poor wiſe man.* Now conſider here,

4. The reaſon of this forgetfulneſs. And there is theſe four following reaſons we ſhall aſſign for it.

(1.) It flows from the univerſal depravation of our nature: the memory, with all the reſt of the faculties of the ſoul, got a daſh by the fall of Adam; our heads were daſhed to pieces, when we fell from ſuch a height of happineſs to ſuch a depth of miſery.

(2.) It flows from the little eſteem and value that people have for the poor wiſe man, and his great works of redeeming and delivering us. It is ſtrange to think, how much the works of men will be admired, and the works of God ſlighted. If a phyſician ſhall perform a cure upon a man that is deſperately diſeaſed, and dangerouſly ill, the man will be more taken up with the phyſician's work than with God's work; he will pay his phyſician, but never thank his God. Many will read the works of men with admiration, and read hiſtory with rapture; but they will read the hiſtory of the life and death of Chriſt without ever being moved.

(3.) It flows from this that the memory is ſtuffed with other things, even with the traſh of hell; there is no room for Chriſt and his works of wonder: it was a baſe treatment of Chriſt when he was ſent out to the ſtable, laid in a manger, no room for him in the inn. But it is a thouſand times worſe, when your heart is ſo full of the world, luſts, and idols, that there is no room for Chriſt.

(4.) It flows from the little impreſſion that Chriſt and his redeeming work takes upon us. Naturaliſts give this as a reaſon of remembrance, when a thing makes *a* mighty impreſſion on the brain. But, alas! the works of God flee over our heads, like a ſhadow, and ſo are forgotten. The beſt thing for the memory is the Spirit of God coming with life and power to the ſoul: "I will never forget thy words, ſays David; why? for by them thou haſt quickened me." It left an impreſſion, and therefore abode. When the word of God, the works of God, have no impreſſion, no wonder they are ſoon forgotten: there is a fowl of the air, the prince of the power of the

air, the devil, he picks away every thing you hear, if your hearts be not cloſets for Chriſt. If he were your treaſure, your hearts would be the cabinets; "Where the treaſure is, there the heart is alſo."

V. The fifth and laſt thing propoſed, was, The application of the ſubject. And this we ſhall eſſay in an uſe of information, lamentation, trial and exhortation.

We are, Firſt, to deduce ſome inferences for information. Is it ſo, as has been ſaid, hence ſee,

1. The deſpicable caſe of the church of God in this world; it is but like a little city, and a few men in it. It is a deſpiſed city. The world calls it an outcaſt, ſaying, "This is Zion whom no man ſeeks after," Jer. xxx. 17. As Chriſt was deſpiſed and rejected of men; ſo are his friends and followers: they are a little flock, and a deſpiſed flock. Whatever be the ſtate of the church viſible; ſometimes when it appears fair as the moon, clear as the ſun, and terrible as an army with banners; and when her viſible glory, the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government is not defaced; yet the church inviſible, in this world, is for ordinary, a poor, ſmall, deſpiſed company; of whom it is ſaid, Zeph. iii. 12. "I will leave in the midſt of thee, an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord."

2. Hence ſee the dangerous circumſtance of the church of God in this world. It is a city beſieged by a great king, building great bulwarks againſt it. The church is like a buſh burning in the midſt of the flames: it is in a dangerous militant ſtate. The church of God is the manchild, which the red dragon ſtands ready to devour, as ſoon as it is born, Rev. xii. 4. What a helpleſs caſe is the church of God into, in outward appearance! A great city cannot ſtand out well againſt a great king, and great bulwarks; far leſs a little city, and few men within it.

3. Hence ſee the marvellous grace of God in finding out a Saviour, and a great one, to ſave the little city; and, behold, "The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that tho' he was great and rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor;" and in the capacity of a poor man, tho' yet infinitely wiſe, being God as well as man, he delivered the city,

city, and raiſed the ſiege. O ſee and admire his wiſdom, by which he delivered the city?

4. Hence ſee the matchleſs ingratitude of the viſible church, where ſuch a great deliverance is wrought; that no man ſhould remember the poor wiſe man; that they ſhould be guilty of ſuch univerſal oblivion. Unbelief diſcovers itſelf by unmindfulneſs; the life of faith is a life of ſpiritual remembrance: but unbelief appears by forgetfulneſs: by faith we remember Chriſt, but by unbelief we forget him, and all his acts of kindneſs and love, though a ſtanding miniſtry be appointed to help our memory; and, Oh! what a horrid ingratitude is it to forget him that minded us? Forgetfulneſs is the ſpring of that deluge of atheiſm and wickedneſs that over-runs the world, and the preſent generation; people forget God and Chriſt. If men did but remember there is a God in heaven, that notices what they do, they could not practiſe as they do: men have their minds ſo ſunk in a preſent world, that they mind no other world; they forget him that came to redeem from this preſent evil world, and to provide a better: while we mind only earthly things we neglect the great ſalvation, and the great Saviour and Deliverer.

5. Hence ſee what is here inferred, ver. 16. that wiſdom is better than ſtrength: Chriſt is frequently here, and in the Proverbs repreſented under the name of Wiſdom; and ſurely the wiſdom of Chriſt is better than the ſtrength of man; better than the ſtrength of carnal policy; better than the ſtrength of human reaſon; better than the ſtrength of armies: yet the poor man's wiſdom is deſpiſed, and his words are not heard; Chriſt is deſpiſed, and his goſpel neglected and rejected.

Uſe 2. Let us then apply this doctrine for lamentation over the beſieged city; particularly the church of Scotland. Let us take a view of the church, and then of the profeſſors therein.

Firſt, Of the church of Scotland, more generally as a city beſieged, and a city delivered; and yet a city moſt ungrateful and unmindful of the Deliverer.

1ſt, As a city many times, and many ways beſieged, eſpe-

eſpecially by the devil and his inſtruments; whom God, in righteouſneſs, ſuffered to vex and diſturb the city, and build great bulwarks againſt it.

I might here begin with the firſt foundation-ſtone, laid in the church of Scotland, more than 1600 years ago, even a few years after Chriſt's aſcenſion, when God, by means of perſecution, ſent Chriſtians and goſpel-profeſſors firſt among us; and we were, in a literal ſenſe, a little city and few men in it. How many great bulwarks of pagan darkneſs, and heathen idolatries, were built in oppoſition to the little city, and the little flock that were the followers of Chriſt, when there was here a temple for Apollo, and there a temple for Diana; one for Jupiter, and another for Juno; one for Mercury, and another for Venus; one for the Sun, and another for the Moon; one for this god and goddeſs, and another for that; and alſo many temples for the devil, for offering ſo many bloody inhuman ſacrifices upon? We may think, how could the little city ſtand when ſurrounded with ſuch great bulwarks againſt it.

I might go forward to the fifth century, when the little city was firſt formally beſieged, and the great bulwark of popiſh darkneſs, and anti-chriſtian ſuperſtition built againſt it. When Palladius was ſent from the Pope of Rome to Scotland, the little city did hold out againſt Rome, for a long time, but the ſiege continued againſt the city for no leſs than ten centuries; for, from the time of Palladius, to the Reformation, was about a thouſand years; for, till the fifteenth century, the little city was covered with that dark cloud, over-run, oppreſſed, and almoſt wholly deſtroyed; only amidſt theſe diſmal days, God had his witneſſes, from time to time, that teſtified againſt Rome and hell, even when they were carrying all before them.

Again, I might deſcend to later times, when the little city was again attacked, and had the great bulwark of prelatical tyranny, and arbitrary power built againſt it; when the inhabitants of the city were hunted, purſued, yea, perſecute to death, impriſoned, fined, confined, baniſhed, martyred and murdered, becauſe of their adhering to the rights and royalties of the glorious Lord

and

and King of the city. Once and again the city was thus moleſted before the late Revolution; and many witneſſes are yet living, that can atteſt the grievous trials of the late reigns *.

Further, I might here obſerve how the city has been beſieged and attacked ſeveral ways in our own time, and within our remembrance, as well as at this preſent time; partly without doors, by late foreign invaſions, and a late unnatural rebellion †, wherein a popiſh faction have attempted to ruin the city in all her moſt valuable and ſacred concerns; and thoſe attempts favoured under-hand, by parliamentary acts, tolerating errors, and reſtoring patronages; and partly within doors, while unnatural citizens ſeek in a manner to ſap the foundations thereof.

QUEST. Who are theſe within the little city that *diſturb* the peace, and deſtroy the foundations of the city.

ANSW. Surely, if there be any party within the city, that are thieves and robbers, not coming in by the doors and gates of the city, but climbing up ſome other way; if there be who ſeek themſelves, and not the welfare of the city; or, that lift up hammers and axes againſt the carved work, the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of the city; if there be any that ſtand not to condemn goſpel-truth, and tolerate damnable errors; if there be any that ſtand not to offend the generation of the righteous, and to wound the citizens, and ſmite them, and take away the vail from them; if there be any that violently thruſt in paſtors upon congregations, or officers upon the city over the belly of the citizens, and that diſcourage a holy and pious ſet of officers, and encourage a looſe, legal, erroneous, and ſcandalous ſet; theſe are ſurely the diſturbers of the peace of the city; theſe are building up great bulwarks againſt it.

2*dly*, Take a view of the church of Scotland not only as a city beſieged, but as a city hitherto delivered by the wiſdom of the poor wiſe man, the glorious Lord Jeſus Chriſt. By

* Alluding particularly to the twenty-eight years perſecution, under Charles II. and James VII. between 1650. and 1688.

† Our Author here has his eye probably upon the intended invaſion by France, in favour of the Pretender, Anno 1708. and upon the actual invaſion and Rebellion in the year 1715.

By his wiſdom he delivered the city, firſt from Paganiſm: not only did he make the goſpel take footing in Scotland, in theſe early times of Chriſtianity, ſo quickly after the reſurrection of Chriſt, that ſome reckon he was not fifteen years in heaven, till he ſent the goſpel to Scotland; and about fifteen thereafter, ſent another drove of Chriſtians, flying before the ſecond primitive perſecution to our land, becauſe they heard the goſpel was received there: But alſo, in the two hundred and third year of Chriſt, ſet up a Chriſtian king, Donald the Firſt, who eſtabliſhed Chriſtianity by law; and broke down the bulwarks of Paganiſm, that were ſupported by the Bards, and Druids, and Pagan prieſts. This deliverance he effected by little and little, till heathen idolatry was aboliſhed.

Again, By his wiſdom he remarkably delivered the city, at the glorious Reformation from Popery, and black antichriſtian ſuperſtition. He turned back our long thouſand years captivity, as ſtreams in the ſouth, and made light to ſhine out of darkneſs, by raiſing up burning and ſhining lights, holy, wiſe, and zealous inſtruments, for beginning, carrying on, and advancing that glorious work, and that in a way of Solemn, National Covenanting, from time to time; in which courſe, the Lord gave ſignal evidences of his gracious preſence and countenance.

Again, By his wiſdom he mercifully delivered the city at the late remarkable Revolution, wherein he gave us more than a little reviving in our bondage, that we were under unto Prelacy and tyranny; and put an opportunity in our hands of advancing reformation-work, more than we had heart and courage to do, at that period. But yet, tho' the glory of the ſecond temple, was not equal to the glory of the firſt; I mean, the Revolution far inferior to the Reformation; yet it was ſuch a glorious work of God, in delivering the city from theſe that fought the utter ruin thereof, that multitudes in this generation, have ſeen the glory of God in his ſanctuary, and been brought to enjoy the privileges and immunities of the city of God; in ſo much, that ſome have thought, that as many have ſhared of the bleſſed

fruits

fruits of this happy Revolution, within theſe forty years paſt, though in a more diffuſed way through the whole nation, as ſhared formerly of the bleſſed fruits of the former Reformation, in a more confined way at remarkable times and places, when the ſpirit was poured out upon great multitudes at once. Whatever be in this, yet, we have reaſon to put a remark upon the wiſdom, power, and grace of our glorious Deliverer.

Finally, By his wiſdom he has from time to time, and even hitherto, delivered the city, not only from invaſions and inſurrections that threatened the ruin of the church and ſtate, and reducing of us unto Popiſh bondage, and Antichriſtian darkneſs; but ſo far has he delivered the city alſo, even from diſturbers and deſtroyers within the city, that goſpel-light is yet ſhining among us, and we have yet acceſs to pure goſpel-ordinances: we are yet allowed, in peace, to keep our ſolemn feaſts; we have Sabbath upon Sabbath, ſermon upon ſermon; *Precept upon precept, and line upon line;* and whatever diſorders have been, and do take place in the city, hitherto ſome teſtimony has been kept up; and, I hope, he has reſerved to himſelf a wreſtling remnant in Scotland, both miniſters and people, that have occaſion to to ſay, by reflection on all the deliverances he has hitherto granted, as it is, Pſal. cxxiv. 1,—4. "Had not the Lord been on our ſide, when men roſe up againſt us, they had ſwallowed us up quick: the waters had overwhelmed us, and the proud waters had gone over our ſouls."—Thus we may view it as a delivered city.

3*dly*, We may look upon this church as a city moſt ungrateful and unmindful of her Deliverer: and this is the great cauſe of all the diſorders, diviſions, and confuſions, all the troubles and diſtreſſes, that befal the city; *No man remembered the ſame poor man.* We are univerſally unbelieving and unmindful; forget to render the praiſes due to the Deliverer: we have no due conſideration of what God has done for us; no deep impreſſion of his wonderful mercy; no practical remembrance of his favour; his goodneſs has not led us to repentance. No wonder that many deſolations are to be ſeen in the city; for, many times Chriſt has ſaid to us,

as to Jeruſalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children under my wings, as a hen doth her chickens, and ye would not? therefore, behold, your houſe is left deſolate." *No man remembered the poor wiſe man,* who is the great Deliverer of the city.

Where is the man that remembers duly the great deliverance that God gave to Scotland at the firſt plantation of the goſpel, when he payed ſuch an early viſit to us, when we were nothing but a pack of blind pagans, when we were worſhipping nothing but ſtocks, and ſtones, and devils? Where is the man that remembers the great deliverance he wrought for us at the glorious Reformation when he threw down the bulwarks of popery, ſo many ages after he had demoliſhed the bulwarks of paganiſm? Where is the man that remembers the merciful deliverance wrought for us at the Revolution, (for, I confine myſelf to the moſt known and remarkable periods;) the fruits of which deliverance we yet enjoy (under the influence of a peaceful prince, whoſe royal family's ſucceſſion to the throne was interwoven with that remarkable period;) which goodneſs and mercy of our great and glorious Deliverer, we ought to remember as long as we enjoy theſe goſpel-ordinances in peace and freedom, and without fear of outward hoſtile diſturbance, ſuch as the followers of Chriſt met with in former reigns, before the ſaid merciful Revolution? Again, where is the man that remembers the many, many other particular deliverances, former and later, that this land has been favoured with? And, how many a time he has beat down the great bulwarks of hell, againſt the little city?

Oh! ungrateful Scotland! How have we forgotten our ſolemn covenanted allegiance to our glorious Deliverer! We, again and again, ſwore with uplifted hands to be for him and his truth, and to defend the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of his houſe, according to the ſcripture-pattern, in oppoſition to all errors and antichriſtian corruptions whatſoever. What evidences have we given of our ingratitude and forgetfulneſs, that, inſtead of remembering theſe national engagements, we have, in many inſtances, contradicted *our* covenanted allegiance, and deſerted our covenanted prin-

principles, broken, burnt, and buried our covenants! "Do we thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh and unwiſe?" What ingratitude appears towards our Deliverer in the encroachments made upon the rules of God's word, which we ſwore to walk by? and to the conſtitution of this church, which our reformers declared to be founded thereupon, in the robbing God's people of the right to chuſe their own paſtors; a right to which our church, by her books of diſcipline, aſſert to belong to them, by the warrant of God's word? But our defection and receſſion from the good old way in that matter, has come to a height, by ſeveral ſteps: to me this receſſion ſeems to have been commenced in the aſſembly 1649, confirmed and advanced in the parliament 1690, and now ſome way conſummate and compleated in the preſent year 1732, ſo as it never was before by any deed of the church *. Again,

* That the origin of Patronage flowed from the papal chair, is granted by every one; that it hath been a heavy burden on the church, and prolutive of the moſt direful conſequences, is abundantly notour; that it never did comport with Presbytery, but was always incompatible therewith, is evident, from its being frequently abolished when Presbytery had the aſcendent; that it hath always, ſince the Reformation, been looked upon as an intolerable yoke and inſupportable grievance in the Church of Scotland, is manifeſt, from the many appearances ſhe hath made againſt it, and attempts uſed to get rid of it:—This is not at all ſurpriſing, ſeeing it is contrary to the ſacred Volume, and inconſiſtent with our Standards. That Patronage is neither agreeable to the rule of God's word, nor to the apoſtolic practice, is apparent from Acts i. 23. 26. vi. 3. viii. 14. xiii. 3. xiv. 23. xvi. 9. 1 John iv. 1. and 2 John 10. That it is inconſiſtent with our Standards, is plain from the Second Book of Diſcipline, Chap. xii. Par. 10, 11.—How criminally guilty then muſt both the Preſenters and Accepters of preſentations be!—The Preſenters of preſentations muſt be highly culpable, ſince they are diametrically oppoſite to the ſacred cannon, contrary to reaſon itſelf, the practice of the primitive and pureſt ages of the church; a plain incroachment upon the natural rights of mankind, and the laws of free ſocieties; a cruel oppreſſion upon ſocieties of men, who duly value their immortal ſouls; and opens a door for a corrupt and lax miniſtry to enter into the church.—The Accepters cannot but be highly guilty, becauſe, if the Patron is guilty of a ſinful uſurpation over the church of God, and ſpoiling and robbing her of her juſt rights and privileges to chooſe her own officers and overſeers, then the Accepter becomes partner with him, approving him in his ſin, homologating his uſurped power, encourages and hardens him in his guilt. Beſides, the Accepter acts contrary to the known principles of Preſbyterians, and their own engagements; ſadly prejudges the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and their own miniſtry; increates the prejudices of the people againſt themſelves; and opens a door to many diſmal evils, as Simonaical paſſions, unchriſtian contentions in judicatories, oppreſſive conculſions in pariſhes, vexatious proſecutions, and ſcandalous intruſions; which is ſtill the more unaccountable, in regard they have it in their power by an act 1719, to render Patronage abortive, by rejecting the preſentation.—From the

Again, what ingratitude do we manifeſt towards our Deliverer, in our forgetting and neglecting to appoint national thankſgiving days, for the many mercies and deliverances that God, from time to time gave, and national faſt-days and humiliation-days for our national guilt; particularly, in this univerſal ſin of not remembering our Deliverer and deliverance, but caſting all his goodneſs behind our backs? What ingratitude are we chargeable with in not improving goſpel-light yet continued with us?

How guilty are we in not remembering God, and the righteouſneſs of God, amidſt all the evils that befal the little city? For, "Is there evil in the city, and I have not done it, ſaith the Lord?" Though we cannot juſtify any treacherous Judas, who betrays Chriſt and his truth; nay, nor vindicate any timorous Peters, who, under ſome temptation, may deny Chriſt and his cauſe at a time; nor ought to juſtify any wicked inſtruments of the diſpeace, deſtruction and diſturbance of the city; yet we ought to juſtify God in all that does befal us, and acknowledge his righteouſneſs; for, "Have we not procured theſe things unto ourſelves, in that we have forſaken the Lord our God," the Deliverer of the city? Jer. ii. 17. "Our own wickedneſs doth correct us, and our backſlidings reprove us." We have not rightly improven the liberties and privileges of the city, that ſometimes we have enjoyed; therefore, God juſtly ſuffers us to be a city robbed and ſpoiled, rent and diſturbed. Let us not, therefore, rail upon miniſters, aſſemblies, judicatories or inſtruments. We ought not to bring a railing accuſation againſt the devil himſelf, but rather ſay, *The Lord rebuke thee:* the Lord rebuke

the above hint, the conduct of the Aſſembly 1732, in appending, by their Act, ſuch a ſanction to Patronage, muſt appear vaſtly ſtrange; a ſanction unparalleled by any preceding Aſſembly. That theſe who ſhould be the guardians of the church's rights and liberties, and who ought to contribute the utmoſt of their endeavours to maintain them, and embrace every opportunity, to be quit of any incroachments made upon them, ſhould themſelves wreath a yoke about the necks of diſciples, which neither they nor their forefathers were able to bear, how amazing! how inconſiſtent!—As the arbitrary proceedings of the Aſſembly in this matter, was one of the principal grounds that gave riſe to the Seceſſion, it was judged proper to give this ſhort hint, that that affair may appear in its proper light. See above, p. 298.

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the devil and his inſtruments; the Lord rebuke an erroneous ſpirit; the Lord rebuke a backſliding ſpirit; the Lord rebuke the inſtruments of the church's calamity. "The Lord is righteous, for we have ſinned." Say not, Such and ſuch perſons have brought ruin upon the church; for, it is you and I, by our ſins, that have provoked God to do it, and will provoke him to more terrible wrath, if we be not humbled for our ſins; and particularly for our not remembering duly our Lord Jeſus, the Deliverer of the city. But now,

Secondly, To forbear any further about the public, and cloſe with what more particularly concerns every one of us, how may we lament our forgetfulneſs of Chriſt? Though his name be as ointment poured forth, we do not remember his love, his precepts, his promiſe, providence, and ordinances. How is this evident? Alas! when do we ſit down and admire him, and his works of redeeming love? If you ſee a curious piece of art, how are you aſtoniſhed? And yet how little filled with wonder at what God has done! We may poſe the conſciences of ſome, whether they ever ſat down a quarter of an hour, all their life-time, full of wonder at the great deliverance Chriſt hath wrought for ſinners?—Again, when do you trumpet forth the deliverance that Chriſt hath wrought, and declare to others what Chriſt hath wrought for you, or for his church? This is the exerciſe of the ſaints, with a charming accent, to cry out, "Thou art glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, excellent in working, doing wonders."—Again, when do you meditate upon him, and upon what he has done for you, and the church, the little city? This is the exerciſe of the ſaints that remember him; "My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet." Alas! we all want conſideration; "The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib, but my people do not know, Iſrael doth not conſider." Conſider how ſinful and provoking this evil of forgetfulneſs is, and the hurtfulneſs of it: it is a manifeſt contempt not to remember or regard the operation of his hand. If a ſkilful artiſt ſhould ſpend half his time in making a curious piece of work, and bring it to you, and you ſhould undervalue it, how highly might the man be offended?

How

How much more may God be offended when you forget his works! God has ſpent ſix days in the work of creation, near ſix thouſand years in the work of providence, and as much time, yea, an eternity itſelf, in the work of redemption; and ſhall we forget and undervalue all? What a manifeſt contempt is this of God, and his Chriſt! It is alſo horrid unthankfulneſs, that he ſhould work for us, and work in us, and we never think upon it. It is a defeating the deſign of his work. His deſign is, that we may ſee his attributes ſhining in his works of grace and mercy, in which ſo many wonders ſhine: wonderful wiſdom, wonderful power, wonderful holineſs, wonderful juſtice, wonderful mercy, wonderful truth. His deſign is, that his doings may be incentives to duty in us, and that we may publiſh his doings to poſterity; but, by forgetfulneſs, we endeavour to defeat all his deſigns. This forgetfulneſs is the mother of apoſtacy. If we forget our duty, we forſake our duty; if we forget God, we forſake God, and depart from him. This forgetfulneſs provokes God: when the city forgets what he hath done for it, this provokes God to do no more for the city. It provokes God, inſtead of works of deliverance and mercy, to work ſome work of judgment, and to perform a ſtrange work. If we forget God, we provoke him, by the law of retaliation, to forget us: yea, total forgetfulneſs of God brings on univerſal ruin; "The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

Uſe 3. We might apply this doctrine for trial. Hence you may try your ſtate. If you be in a ſafe ſtate, then,

1. You will be like a little city; you will be very little in your own eyes; a poor helpleſs creature in your own eſteem.

2. You have ſeen yourſelf beſieged; you have ſeen yourſelf to be under the wrath of God, under the power of the devil, under the dominion of ſin and death: you have ſeen great bulwarks built up againſt you, which it was impoſſible for you to bring down; and that you were undone for ever unleſs you met with a *Deliverer.*

3. If

3. If your ſtate be ſafe, you have a view of Chriſt, the Deliverer and Saviour; you have got a view of him as a man, a God-man, a poor man, a poor but wiſe man, a man found out of God for this work. Have you ſeen him to be the wiſdom of God, and the power of God? And have you ſeen the wiſdom of God ſhining in his delivering the city, by ſatisfying the juſtice of God, deſtroying the works of the devil, giving himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, and, by death, delivering from the ſting of death, and ſo the wiſdom of God in deſtroying the bulwarks that were built againſt you?

4. Have you been brought to the believing remembrance of him, to a daily remembrance of him; and are you afflicted that you remember him ſo little? But your errand to a communion-table was to remember him, and what he hath done for you; and is it your deſire and endeavour to remember him ſtill, and to remember his love more than wine; and to remember to live on him, and to live to him?

Uſe 4. I would now cloſe with a word of exhortation.

1. That you would come to Chriſt the Deliverer of the city. O ſinner! while you are without Chriſt you are in a dangerous caſe; you are like a little city, having great kings againſt you, erecting great bulwarks againſt you.—God's bulwarks are ſet againſt you; his juſtice, his wrath, his curſe, his vengeance, how can you eſcape? Are you able to fight againſt God?—The devil's bulwarks are againſt you, and you cannot ſtand againſt his temptations; he will tempt you to ſin till he turn you to hell, if he get his will of you.—Sin's bulwarks are againſt you; the guilt of ſin, the power of ſin you ly under: ſin will preſs you to hell if you be not delivered.—Death's bulwarks are againſt you; how ſoon you ſhall die is uncertain; perhaps it may be this night, or to-morrow, or the next day; you know not preciſely: but come death when it will, if it meet you out of Chriſt, it will have a terrible ſting, a terrible train of woes and miſeries to all eternity; the firſt death will be followed with the ſecond death, which is the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone, Rev. xxi. 8. And therefore, O

ſin-

ſinner! flee from the wrath to come; flee for refuge to Chriſt the Deliverer.

Will you come to the God-man for deliverance? Will you inliſt yourſelf with the poor wiſe man? *Will you go with this man?* You have no wiſdom to deliver yourſelves, no more than you have power; but he, by his wiſdom, delivers the city. Though you have been playing the fool all your days, and though you be never ſuch a witleſs fool, this man minds you; here is wiſdom to deliver you: He is made of God to you wiſdom. By his wiſdom he ſatisfied God's juſtice; by his wiſdom he defeat the devil; by his wiſdom he deſtroyed ſin; by his wiſdom he conquered death. O take on with the Deliverer, and you have the deliverance; for, he that is the Saviour is the ſalvation of ſinners. Though you can do nothing, it needs be no ſtop to you, for wiſdom can do all for you. O be content that you be nothing, and that he by his wiſdom be all to you, and do all for you. It is a leading part of faith to know that you cannot ſave or deliver yourſelves, and to welcome the Saviour and ſalvation brought to your hand; and believingly to remember what he has done for you, and what he is ready to do to you. Say not, there ſtands ſo many things in the way; darkneſs, deadneſs, hardneſs, unbelief, enmity, and innumerable evils that you need to be delivered from; for it is his office to deliver the city, to deliver the ſoul from all theſe bulwarks of hell; ſince he by his infinite wiſdom offers to deliver, put all the work in his wiſe and powerful hands.

2. I would exhort you to remember the Deliverer; let it not be his complaint, *No man remembered the poor wiſe man.* O remember him that remembered you in your low eſtate; that remembered you from eternity; that remembered you when he was upon the croſs; that remembers you now in heaven, when he intercedes for you at the Father's right hand; for he ever lives to make interceſſion; and is he ever remembering you, and will you never remember him? Remember what he has done for you; believe all that ever he did was for you; his works of creation, providence, and redemption are *on your* account. You have an intereſt in all his works: there-

therefore, do not forget his works. Conſider, that he remembers you when you forget him. Yea, when you forget yourſelf; *Zion ſaid, The Lord hath forgotten me:* but the Lord ſaid, "Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, ſhe may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

We ſhall now ſhut up the whole diſcourſe by giving you two directions.

1. O ſeek the Holy Ghoſt to be your Remembrancer; ſome on hearing the word have committed it to the Lord by fervent prayer, that he would keep it for them; and that very ſame word has been brought home to their hearts, with unſpeakable pleaſure in the day of their darkneſs. The Spirit of God is the beſt Remembrancer; ſeek he may teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance.

2. Seek for a new look of Chriſt: Chriſt looked upon Peter, and then Peter remembered Chriſt and his word. A look of Chriſt will make you remember your ſin with grief and ſorrow. O ſtudy a perpetual remembrance of him, ſo as never to forget him and his kindneſs; and a practical remembrance of him, ſo as though you cannot remember him, ſo as to mind all that he ſays, yet you may remember to do what he ſays, and to glorify your Deliverer with your hearts, lips, and lives. Remember what great things he has done for the little city, and what great things he has yet to do. Wait on him till he finiſh his work.

SERMON LXXXIV.

The LAMB in the Midſt of the THRONE. *

REV. vii. 17.

For the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them.——

WE are met this day to celebrate the memorials of the love of Chriſt, in his death and crucifixion, upon mount Calvary. And that our faith may look to him in the beſt light, and to the beſt advantage, we are to remember, not only where he once was, but where he now is; and we will find, we need not be aſhamed of a crucified Chriſt that was once upon the croſs, for now he is upon the throne. The Lamb that was ſlain, as a ſacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice for us, the once dying Lamb in the midſt of the croſs, is now the everliving Lamb in the midſt of the throne. And from this throne of God, where he reigns, we expect our food and proviſion upon the feaſt-day; according to the words of the text, *The Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them.*

From the 13th verſe of this chapter we have a deſcription of the honour and happineſs of theſe that ſhall faithfully ſerve, and patiently ſuffer for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Some interpreters think, that the happineſs of

* This ſermon was preached immediately before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Dunfermline, June 10th, 1733.

the

the ſaints militant, even in this world, is here deſcribed; ſome, that it is only the happineſs of the ſaint triumphant in heaven; others make this place of ſcripture relate to both, and with theſe eſpecially I join; becauſe, whatever honour and happineſs of ſuffering ſaints is here ſet forth, they enjoy the ſame partly in this life, and fully in the life to come, as may appear by the particulars here mentioned.

The happy perſons are ſpoken of, ver. 14. "Theſe are they that have come out of great tribulation." Whatever relation ſome think this may have to the church of Chriſt on earth, after they have eſcaped the antichriſtian bloody perſecution; or as others, to the martyrs in heaven, that have ſuffered unto death for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; yet it may be ſaid of all the militant ſaints, who, thro' much trouble, enter into the kingdom of heaven, and therein are conformed to their ſuffering Head, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and bear about in their body the dying of the Lord Jeſus. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all." It may be ſaid of all the ſaints, Theſe are they that have come from trouble to reſt, from bondage to liberty, from death to life, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The perfection of this purity they have in heaven; but even here on earth they are waſhed in the blood of Chriſt, and clothed with the white robe of his imputed and imparted righteouſneſs.

Verſe 15. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his temple: and he that ſitteth on the throne, ſhall dwell among them." This ſeems to be a further deſcription of the happineſs of the ſaints, both militant and triumphant; as they are happy,

1. In their ſtate, being waſhed, juſtified, and ſanctified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of their God.

2. They are happy in their ſtation, being always before the throne of God. The glorified ſaints in heaven are always in that preſence where there is fulneſs of joy: and the ſanctified ones upon earth have this bleſſing alſo beſtowed upon them, they are ſaid to ſit with him in hea-

venly places; and it is their daily work to come boldly to the throne of grace. Again,

3. They are happy in their ſervice; for, "They ſerve him day and night in his temple." Tho' theſe that are in heaven, ſerve him without weakneſs or wearineſs, which we cannot here do; yet it is the property of all the true circumciſion to worſhip God in the Spirit, and in truth, and to pray without ceaſing; meditating on his law day and night, and going to the altar of God; to God in Chriſt, the true ſpiritual temple.

4. They are happy in their company; for, *He that ſits upon the throne ſhall dwell among them.* This points out friendſhip, fellowſhip and familiarity between God and the redeemed; which alſo Chriſt allows to the militant ſaints in part, when, upon opening the door of their heart, he comes in and ſups with them, and they with him, Rev. iii. 20. And they are in caſe to ſay, "Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt," 1 John i. 3. Yea God ſays, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my people."

5. They are happy in their freedom; they ſhall be freed from all want, and all uneaſineſs. From all want; for, *They ſhall hunger no more, neither ſhall they thirſt any more:* for this freedom will be perfected in heaven, as it is commenced on earth; as the prophet ſays, ſpeaking of Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom, Iſa. xlix. 10. "They ſhall not hunger nor thirſt," *&c.* Hence ſays Chriſt, John vi. 35. "He that comes to me ſhall never hunger, and he that believeth in me ſhall never thirſt;" pointing out the ſpiritual pleaſure and ſatisfaction they ſhall have, and never be altogether deprived of. From all uneaſineſs alſo ſhall they be freed; *Neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat;* or, as it is in the forcited Iſa. xlix. 10. *Neither ſhall the heat nor ſun ſmite them.* The redeemed above are perfectly freed from all uneaſineſs: and even the redeemed on earth, according to the meaſure of faith, ſuch will be their meaſure of eaſe, even amidſt all things that tend to make them uneaſy. Chriſt ſays to them, "Fear not, only believe: Fear not, I am with you: Fear not *him* that can at moſt but kill the body:" the very hairs of *our* head are all numbered; you may be perfectly eaſy.

No.

Nothing is more uneaſy than the ſun in the meridian regions; ſo are afflictions and perſecutions to the ſaints, and the temptations they are attacked with from earth and hell? But, "God is faithful, ſays the apoſtle, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that you may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 12.

6. They are happy in their proviſion; becauſe, *The Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them*, hence he is ſaid to feed his flock like a ſhepherd. The feeding here ſpoken of, imports alſo rule and government, ſuch as a ſhepherd hath over his flock. It is in the believing view of the provident, loving Shepherd, the pſalmiſt ſays, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I ſhall not want," Pſal. xxiii. 1.

7. They are happy in their direction and conduct; in their director, guide and conductor: "He ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters." Now, of theſe living waters the Lord Jeſus ſpeaks, as they reſpect even his people in this world, John iv. 14. and vii. 38. "The water that I give, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life: and, Out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living waters." By theſe they have matter of comfort amidſt all their croſſes. Hence,

8. They are here ſaid to be happy in their joys; for, "God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" that is, all their griefs and ſorrows ſhall be ſwallowed up in the fulneſs of joy and conſolation that ſhall be abundantly allowed them. The commencement of this joy is even here, amidſt all the troubles and trials of the militant ſaints: "For behold, ſays God, I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing and her people a joy, and the voice of weeping ſhall be no more heard," Iſa. lxv. 18. And hence they are ſometimes filled with joy and peace in believing; yea, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

It is the firſt part of this laſt verſe, that I have eſpecially my eye upon; particularly, that deſcription of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which the commentators, I have conſulted, paſs over more ſlighty than I expected, namely, *The Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne.* Where we have our Lord Jeſus deſcribed, 1. From his meekneſs and humi-

humility; therefore he is called the Lamb. 2. From his majeſty and authority; he is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. What benefit accrues to his church, from his meek and majeſtic government, follows in the reſt of the verſe, which, if I have time, I may a little inſiſt upon. But what I eſpecially propoſe to ſpeak to, as the Lord may aſſiſt, is, from the ſweet account given us here of our Lord Jeſus. And this we ſhall eſſay in the following doctrinal propoſition.

OBSERV. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne.

And, as the pſalmiſt ſays, Pſal. cxxi. 1. *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help*; ſo let us lift up our eyes to the throne from whence comes our food to-day: and we may the more readily and joyfully do ſo, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, to be the feeder. That I may open and apply this doctrine for our benefit, I propoſe the following method,

I. Speak a little of the Lamb.
II. Of the throne.
III. How the Lamb comes to be upon the throne.
IV. What is imported in the Lamb's being in the *midſt* of the throne.
V. Conſider the benefit of feeding, that iſſues from the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne.
VI. Deduce ſome inferences for application.

I. We are to offer a word concerning the LAMB. This is a name frequently given to our Lord Jeſus in ſcripture: and he is ſo called, both becauſe of his immaculate whiteneſs and innocency, and becauſe of his incomparable meekneſs and patience: he is a Lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot, 1 Pet. i. 19. and his meekneſs was matchleſs, of which more afterward: he is the Lamb of God, the worthy Lamb, the Lamb that was ſlain.

I ſhall only here mention four periods, wherein he is repreſented as a Lamb.

1. In his deſignation from the beginning, yea, from all eternity, to be a ſacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice: hence,

hence, Rev. xiii. 8. he is called the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world: ſlain decretively, in the purpoſe of God, before the foundation of the world was laid; and ſlain typically, in all the ſacrifices under the law.

2. In his manifeſtation, when he appeared in our nature, he is pointed out as the Lamb that was come to be a ſacrifice for ſin, John i. 29. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſins of the world:" and again, ver. 36. "Behold the Lamb of God." To this purpoſe ſays the ſame beloved diſciple, 1 John iii. 5. "You know that he was manifeſted to take away our ſins."

3. In his humiliation unto death, he is repreſented as the meek and patient Lamb, Acts viii. 32. "He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter; and like a Lamb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth;" which are the words of the prophet, Iſa. liii. 7. Thus ſaith the Lord, by the prophet, chap. l. 5, 6. "He was not rebellious, neither turned away back: I gave my back to the ſmiter, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting."

4. In his exaltation, or in his exalted ſtate, he is in ſcripture repreſented as a Lamb; particularly Rev. v. 6. "And I beheld, and lo, in the midſt of the throne, and in the midſt of the elders, ſtood a Lamb as it had been ſlain, having ſeven horns and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God ſent forth into all the earth." This is the ſcripture that our preſent text hath a reference unto; and therefore, concerning it you may obſerve the deſcription given of this Lamb.

(1.) As the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne; of which more afterwards. Only, you ſee, in his exalted ſtate at the Father's right-hand, he is ſtill the Lamb: change of place hath not made him change his name, or nature: he took our human nature along with him; and he is ſtill the meek and lowly Lamb, though he be upon the throne.

(2.) He is deſcribed by being the Lamb ſlain; a Lamb as it had been ſlain. He appears with the marks of his ſufferings upon him, to ſhew that he intercedes in heaven in the virtue of his ſatisfaction; becauſe he entered the holy place by his own blood, Heb. ix. 12. And

the virture of the ſacrifice he offered is always freſh, as if he were newly ſlain.

(3.) He is deſcribed as a Lamb having ſeven horns; pointing out the perfection of his power to execute all the will of God, and to conquer all his enemies. This Lamb is the *power* of God.

(4.) He is deſcribed as a Lamb having ſeven eyes; pointing out the perfection of his wiſdom, to underſtand all the will of God, and to do it in the moſt effectual manner. As he is the *power* of God, ſo he is the *wiſdom* of God; for he hath the Spirit of God above meaſure: therefore it is ſaid, "The ſeven eyes are the ſeven ſpirits of God;" not ſeven in number or in nature, but in reſpect of the diverſity of the gifts and operations of that one and eternal Spirit of God. This Lamb of God then, is he that hath the Spirit of the Lord God upon him, for he hath anointed him; and he is anointed, that he may anoint. And O may the Lamb with the ſeven eyes, look upon this aſſembly, and give eyes to us to ſee his glory this day, that our hearts may join iſſue with the heavenly company, Rev. v. 12. "Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing."

II. The next thing we propoſed, was a word concerning the *throne*. Here we would conſider, what for a throne it is, and why called a throne.

1*ſt*, What kind of a throne is it which the Lamb is ſaid to be in the midſt of? We may anſwer, It is the throne of God, Rev. xxii. 1. 3. There it is called the throne of God and the Lamb. The throne of God is the throne of the Lamb, and the throne of the Lamb is the throne of God. It is the throne of grace, the throne of glory, the throne of his holineſs, and the throne of his juſtice.

1. It is called the throne of divine grace, Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace.* Why ſo? becauſe we have a High-prieſt there; the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. And, indeed the throne of grace is nothing elſe than a God in Chriſt, a God reconciled in Chriſt,

Chriſt, a God upon a mercy-ſeat, ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt.

2. It is called the throne of divine glory, Jer. xiv. 21. "Do not diſgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us." The prophet there ſpeaks of the temple, and the ark in it, the ſymbol of God's preſence; which was typical of Chriſt, in whom the covenant of grace ſtands faſt: and ſo it is called the throne of glory, becauſe all the glory of God ſhines about that throne. As the grace of God is the glory of God, ſo all the glory of God ſhines in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. Therefore,

3. It is called a throne of divine holineſs, Pſal. xlvii. 8. "God ſitteth upon the throne of his holineſs." Holineſs becomes his houſe, holineſs becomes his throne, and holineſs is his throne: there is nothing there, but the holy God, the holy Lamb, the holy throne; and they that are about it, cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hoſts," Iſa. vi. 3.

4. It is called the throne of his juſtice; Pſal. lxxxi. 14. "Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." And, Pſalm xcvii. 2. "Clouds and darkneſs are round about him, yet righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne." His glorious and holy throne of grace ſtands firm upon the baſe and foundation of juſtice ſatisfied for the ſinner, and judgment execute againſt ſin, in the blood of the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne. It is therefore no hindrance or impediment to our acceſs to the throne of grace, that it is alſo a throne of juſtice; but rather a furtherance and encouragement, becauſe there grace reigns through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. v. 21. And, ſince grace reigns there through juſtice-ſatisfying righteouſneſs, why then, God may with honour meet with ſinners, and there ſinners may with hope draw near to God.—This is the throne of God and the Lamb.

2*dly*, Why is it called a throne? The place, in the midſt whereof the Lamb is, is called a throne, on theſe accounts.

1. A throne is a place of powerful and majeſtic glory, honour, and dignity. Jeſus Chriſt, the Lamb, is ſet in the

the midſt of this place, crowned with glory and honour, Heb. ii. 9. His Father crowned him King there, ſaying, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," Pſal. xlv. 6.

2. A throne is a place of power and authority.—Chriſt, the Lamb, is ſet in the midſt of this throne; for, "All power in heaven and earth is given to him," Mat. xxviii. 18. All judgment is committed to him; and the government is upon his ſhoulders.

3. A throne is a place of height and eminency. Chriſt, the Lamb, is in the midſt of this place; Iſa. vi. 7. "I ſaw the Lord ſitting upon a throne high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple." His Father hath ſet him on the higheſt throne; "He hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name," Phil. ii. 9.

4. A throne is a place of plenty; thence the royal bounty is communicated. Chriſt, the Lamb, is in the midſt of this place; hence it is ſaid, Col. i. 19. "It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell;" and again, "In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge;" all the treaſures of grace; and, "Out of his fulneſs we all receive, and grace for grace," John i. 16.

5. A throne is a place of beauty, as well as bounty; it is a beautiful and ſplendid place. And to ſee the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, is to ſee the King in his beauty, Iſa. xxxiii. 17. "Strength is within his holy place, and there doth beauty ſhine;" there doth glory ſhine.

6. In a word, a throne is a place of pleaſure, peace, joy, and triumph. The Lamb is in the midſt of this place: having aſcended up on high, and led captivity captive, Pſalm lxviii. 18. He ſits triumphant upon the throne, making all his enemies his footſtool. If he triumphed over them on the croſs, as it is ſaid, Col. ii. 15. how much more does he triumph over them on the throne, making all believers ſharers of his joyful triumph!

III. The next thing I propoſed was, To ſhow how the Lamb comes to be upon the throne. I ſhall tell you in a few words, that he bargained for the throne, he wrought for the throne, he fought for the throne, he *died for* the throne.

1. The

1. He bargained for the throne. In the counſel of peace, betwixt the Father and the Son, it was promiſed to Chriſt, that, upon his doing and ſuffering for his people, he ſhould have a glorious throne, and a numerous retinue: that he ſhould ſee his ſeed, and ſee the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied, Iſa. liii. 10, 11. The Lamb cries out, It is a bargain that I chearfully go in to; "Lo, I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is within my heart," Pſalm xl. 7, 8. Hence ſays the Father, "I have made a covenant with my choſen," Pſal. lxxxix. 3.

2. He wrought for the throne. According to the bargain and covenant between the Father and him, he brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs, Dan. ix. 24.; he fulfilled all righteouſneſs, Mat. iii. 15. And hence he claims the crown and the throne; "I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory I had with thee before the world was," John xvii. 4, 5. Thus he wrought for the throne.

3. He fought for the throne. You may ſee how he fought, Iſa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah: This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength? I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave! Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel? and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment." And on this account the Lamb ſits upon a triumphant throne, having ſpoiled principalities and powers; bruiſed the head of the old ſerpent; deſtroyed the works of the devil; and came off the field like a glorious conqueror. Therefore, "The Lord ſaid unto our Lord, Sit thou at my right-hand," Pſalm cx. 1. In which Pſalm you read both of the bloody battle, and the glorious enthronement of the Lamb.

4. He died for the throne. Having drunk of the brook in the way, therefore did he lift up the head, Pſalm cx. 7. And, becauſe he became obedient unto the death, even the death

death of the croſs; therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, Phil. ii. 8, 9. When he had the croſs upon his back, he had the throne in his eye; "For the joy that was ſet before him, he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is now ſet down at the right-hand of the throne of God," Heb. xii. 2. And thus, for the ſuffering of death, he was crowned with glory and honour, chap. ii. 9.—Our faith then may ſee and be ſatisfied how he came by the throne. But, for widening and increaſing faith's view of this enthronement, I proceed,

IV. To the next thing propoſed, namely, To ſhew what may be imported in the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne. And,

1. That the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, ſpeaks forth the dignity of his perſon, his ſupreme Deity, and equality with the Father. Though, in his infinite love, he thought it no diſparagement, at his Father's call, to make himſelf of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a ſervant; yet, being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, Phil. ii. 6. And his Father thinks it no diſparagement to him, to call even the ſuffering Lamb, the crucified Jeſus, his fellow and equal; "Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my fellow," Zech. xiii. 9.; yea, to crown him King upon his everlaſting throne, ſaying to him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," Heb. i. 8. O Sirs, if the Chriſt-diſparaging and ſoul-damning doctrine of Arians were true, the Lamb would not be worthy of ſuch a throne, far leſs the midſt of the throne.

2. That the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, imports and ſpeaks forth the height of his exaltation. Beſides the natural right as God, that Chriſt hath to the throne, he hath a donative right as Mediator, and becauſe, as Mediator he hath brought in glory to God in the higheſt; therefore, he is exalted to the higheſt throne that his Father can give him: "I will make him my firſt-born, higher than the kings of the earth," Pſalm lxxxix. 27. And now, according to his promiſe, "Let *all the* houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made

made the ſame Jeſus that was crucified, both Lord and Chriſt," Acts ii. 6. And being now poſſeſſed of the throne, "He hath on his veſture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords;*" and the rather that it is a ſcarlet robe, *a veſture dipt in blood*, Rev. xix. 13, 14. to ſhow, that it is the worthy Lamb that was ſlain in the midſt of the throne.

3. That the Lamb is in the mieſt of the throne, imports, I think, the perfection of his mediation, and exactneſs thereof. O but this part of the throne be fit for him, and he fit for it! It well becomes him to be there; he is the middle perſon between the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, and the middle perſon between God and man; and it well becomes him to have the middle part of the throne. The Mediator and midſman having the midſt of the throne, it ſays, he is a perfect Mediator, a merciful and faithful High-prieſt, Heb. ii. 17.; faithful to God, and merciful to man; true to both parties, between whom he ſtands in the midſt of the throne.

4. That the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, imports the beautiful order and equity of his adminiſtration. As the government is upon his ſhoulders, ſo it will be a juſt, righteous, and equal government: "Behold, a King ſhall reign in righteouſneſs; even the man that ſhall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt, Iſa. xxxii. 1. With righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth. Righteouſneſs ſhall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins," Iſa. xi. 4, 5. His adminiſtration ſhall be ſo righteous and equal, that none ſhall have occaſion to complain that he hath gone too far, either to the right-hand or to the left-hand of the throne: no; he will ever keep the midſt of the throne; and his government, like his covenant, will be well-ordered in all things.

5. That the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, imports the acceſſibleneſs of the throne of God on every hand. The Lamb is upon the throne of God, and therefore there is acceſs to the throne; for, the Lamb being there, clothed with his veſture dipped in blood, we may come boldly to the throne of grace, and have bold-

boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, Heb. iv. 16. x. 19. If the Lamb were not there, ſuch guilty ſinners durſt not be ſo bold as to look a juſt and holy God in the face, or approach to his throne: But, O good news and bleſſed tidings! the Lamb being our Forerunner, we may boldly go as far forward, as the blood of the Lamb hath run in like a river before us; and that is to the very heart and centre of the throne of God. Yea, not only is the Lamb upon the throne, which ſpeaks acceſs thither; but he is in the midſt of the throne, which ſpeaks acceſs on every hand, and on every ſide of the throne. If he were only placed at the one ſide of the throne, it might be thought there would be no acceſs at the other ſide; but being in the midſt of the throne, he is ready to welcome all comers from all quarters, ſaying, *Whoſoever will, let him come*, from eaſt, weſt, north, or ſouth; let him come on this ſide, or that ſide, or directly before the throne; yea, let any poor creature, who bluſhes to be ſeen, come ſlipping ſecretly, as it were, behind the throne, like the woman with the bloody iſſue, that came behind him, ſaying, "If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole." O to get in if it were but behind the throne this day, to get a touch of the royal robes of the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne! Welcome, ſinner, there is acceſs on every hand of the throne, for the Lamb is in the midſt of it. The Lamb of God, which lies in the midſt of his Father's throne, to welcome and receive all comers, ſaying, "Him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out."

6. That the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, imports, that the Lamb is the centre of all the glory that ſurrounds and encompaſſes the throne of God, or the throne of grace.—He is the centre of divine fulneſs, and of all the glorious perfections of God; for, "In him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9. Every attribute of God ſhines glorioufly in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.—He is the centre of all divine truths; and we cannot know any precious goſpel truths, or myſteries, in a ſaving and ſatisfying manner, unleſs we know the truth as it is in Jeſus, Eph. iv. 21.—He is the centre of *all the* divine promiſes, being the centre of the covenant

of

of grace, in whom it ſtands faſt, and "In whom all the promiſes are Yea and Amen to the glory of God," 2 Cor. i. 20.—He is the centre of all divine bleſſings; for, God bleſſes us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places, only in Chriſt, Eph. i. 3.—He is the centre of all divine grace; for, it is out of his fulneſs that we receive, and grace for grace, John i. 16.—He is the centre of all divine comfort; for, he is the conſolation of Iſrael; and he is anointed with the oil of joy and gladneſs above his fellows, Pſal. xlv. 7. that he may anoint with the ſame oil, and bring his people to fellowſhip with him in the ſame ſpirit of joy and conſolation, according to their meaſure.—He is the centre of all ſaving offices; being, as a Prophet, the Wiſdom of God, for our illumination; as a Prieſt, the righteouſneſs of God, for our juſtification; and as a King, the Power of God, for our ſanctification.—He is the centre of all ſweet relations; the Saviour, the Surety, the Head, the Huſband, the All and in All of his people; their Light, and Life, and Strength, and Righteouſneſs, and Rock, and Refuge, and Portion.—He is the centrical place, where God and man may meet together; for, he dwells between the cherubims, on the mercy-ſeat, and over theſe; "There will I meet with thee," Exod. xxv. 22. "There will I commune with thee." And no communion with God can we have but in him, who is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, and middle-perſon between God and us.—In a word, being in the centre of the throne, he is the centre of all things; he is the centre of all the ſins of the redeemed, for their expiation; for, "The Lord hath laid on him, [or, made to *meet in* him,] the iniquity of us all," Iſa. liii. 6.—And the centre of all their ſervice, for their acceptation; for, "We are accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6. And thus he is ſomeway the centre of all things; for, as all things are in his hands, ſo all things in heaven and earth are ſaid to meet in him, Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20. And therefore, the Lamb who is in the midſt and centre of the throne, ought to be the centre of our hearts and affections, the centre of our love and delight.——Thus, among other things, he is the centre of all our proviſion. Which leads to,

V. The

V. The Fifth thing propoſed, which was, To view the benefit of feeding that iſſues from the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne; *He ſhall feed them.* Whatever other paſtoral care, rule, or government this word imports; yet I ſhall, becauſe this is a feaſt-day, conſider that part of his paſtoral care that is here expreſt by the word FEED: *The Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them.* If I were to enlarge upon this ſubject, I might tell you how the Lamb feeds his church and people, with the manifeſtations of his glory, with the intimations of his love, with the communications of his grace, and with the conſolations of his Spirit: but I confine myſelf to the doctrine of the Lamb being in the midſt of the throne; and therefore I ſhall ſpeak to this feeding only as it relates to that doctrine. The Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne is the food; the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne is the feeder; and the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne makes the feeding of thoſe that are the followers of the Lamb, to have the following qualities. All our ſacramental food and proviſion, this day, muſt come from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. Therefore,

1. It muſt be kindly food and proviſion that comes from the throne, ſince the Lamb is in the midſt of it. The meek Lamb, the loving Lamb, that feeds his flock like a ſhepherd, gathers the lambs with his arms, carries them in his boſom, and gently leads thoſe that are with young, Iſa. xl. 11. He makes them to ly down in green paſtures, Pſalm xxiii. 2. He makes them to go out and in, and find paſture, John x. 9. It is ſweet, and eaſy, and kindly feeding, that iſſues from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. And yet,

2. It muſt be powerful feeding that comes from thence; it is from the throne of power: and, indeed, you will not feed to advantage this day, unleſs power come from the throne to make you take your food. It is the work of the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, to feed by the efficacy of his grace: all the means and miniſters in the world cannot make a ſoul open its mouth or heart for this

this food, till power come from the throne; and yet when it cometh, it comes ſo ſweetly and kindly, that there is nothing like force or violence. The man is made as frank and free, in going out after Chriſt, to be the food of his periſhing ſoul, as if there were no power at all put forth in the caſe. Power makes him eat and feed heartily; "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power," Pſal. cx. 3.

3. It muſt be ſpiritual feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; for his throne, his kingdom is a ſpiritual kingdom, it is not of this world: "The fleſh profits nothing;" his words are ſpirit and life. Food for the ſoul muſt be ſpiritual food: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt," Rom. xiv. 17.

4. It muſt be plentiful proviſion and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; for it is a rich throne, and all fulneſs is there. There is plenty of wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; abundance of all ſorts. Here is wiſdom enough, for the moſt ignorant; righteouſneſs enough, for the moſt guilty; ſanctification enough, for the moſt filthy; redemption enough, for the moſt ruined; comfort enough, for the moſt ſorrowful; ſtrength enough, for the weakeſt; *They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe*, Pſal. xxxvi. 8. O the plenty that is about the throne! Plenty of divine perfections to feed upon, when viewed in Chriſt. Indeed, the mildeſt attributes of God, out of Chriſt, will be a terrible ſight; but the moſt terrible attributes of God, in Chriſt, are a pleaſant feaſt; even juſtice, holineſs and truth. Here is plenty of promiſes to feed upon, while the performance is delayed. Every thing in Chriſt is a feaſt; his names, and natures, offices, life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, interceſſion; his merit, his Spirit, his word, his fleſh, his blood, and victory.

5. It muſt be ſuitable food that comes from this quarter; for, the Lamb being in the midſt of the throne, will diſtribute equally and ſuitably. He cannot poſſibly fail and miſcarry, by giving too much, or too little; being in the middle of the throne, and the middle perſon be-

between God and man, to communicate what is ſuitable for God to give, and ſuitable for man to have, no more and no leſs does he communicate, becauſe he is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. And, indeed, as a key is ſuited to a lock, ſo is Chriſt's fulneſs to our wants. We are diſeaſed, he is a Phyſician; we are loſt, he is a Saviour; we are debtors, he is the Surety; we are dead, he is Life; we are blind, he is Eye-ſalve; we are naked, he is Clothing; we are troubled, he is Reſt: Are we bewildered? he is a Guide: Are we in danger? he is a Guard: Are we benighted? he is a Sun: Are we aſſaulted? he is a Shield.—Who in heaven or earth can thus ſupply our wants, heal our wounds, bear our burdens, ſweeten our afflictions, ſubdue our enemies, as Chriſt? O ſuitable feeding to the ſoul is here in all caſes!

6. It muſt be joyful feeding and proviſion that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; for, the throne is a place of joy and triumph. Here muſt be the choiceſt cheer, amidſt the choiceſt company; God, and Chriſt, and angels, and ſaints. There is as much ſweetneſs in Chriſt, as there is fulneſs and ſuitableneſs: He is the fountain of ſweetneſs; his mouth is moſt ſweet, his preſence is moſt ſweet, his fruits are moſt ſweet; "I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, ſays the church, and his fruits were ſweet to my taſte," Song ii. 3. Here are the ſweet rivers of living waters that drive away all death and ſorrow, as it follows here in the text.

7. It muſt be free proviſion and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. There is nothing to pay about a throne; this would be a diſgrace and diſparagement to the prince that poſſeſſes the throne: ſo here, all is to be had freely. The fineſt is always the freeſt, Iſa. lv. 1. The legaliſts, that cannot feed upon Chriſt and his righteouſneſs freely, but only on their own works and duties, they feed upon aſhes: the legal preacher, that cannot offer Chriſt freely, is like the unnatural fathers, that when their children aſk bread, give them a ſtone; when they aſk a fiſh, give them a ſcorpion. What is our beſt performances but ſcorpions,

ſer-

ſerpents, ſtones, yea, poiſon to them that make them their ſoul-food? Nothing can feed the ſoul but Chriſt. Rabſhakeh threatened to make all the people on the wall to eat their own dung, 2 Kings xviii. 26. the legal preacher accompliſhes this threatening, in a ſpiritual ſenſe; our beſt works are but dung; "I will ſpread the dung of your ſacrifices on your faces, even the dung of your ſolemn feaſts." But, O Sirs, here the fineſt and ſweeteſt feaſt is the freeſt; from the throne of grace proceed all bleſſings freely.

8. It muſt be durable proviſion and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne: for he ever lives upon the throne, and his throne is for ever and ever; and therefore everlaſting food comes from thence, and food that nouriſhes to everlaſting life: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven, ſays Chriſt; if any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever," John vi. 15. Here is proviſion for eternity; "Labour not for the meat that periſheth, ſays Chriſt, but for that meat that endures to everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you," John vi. 27. What a fool was he, that filled his barns, and then ſaid, "Soul, take thy reſt, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years!" while God ſaid to him, "Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee?" But, O what wiſdom were it to lay up for eternity this day, that death may not be able to rob you of your ſtore, but that ye may have it all before your hand! The Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne, lives for ever there to feed; "He lives for ever to make interceſſion;" he lives for ever to make proviſion: they have everlaſting food, who have the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne to feed them.—Thus you ſee what ſort of feeding is to be had under the throne of the Lamb, and who it is that muſt cover our table this day, even the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; he hath mounted the throne, to be a feeder, and to let down bleſſings to the footſtool.

VI. The laſt thing propoſed, was, The application. Is it ſo, that our Lord Jeſus is the Lamb in the midſt of

the throne? Hence we may infer theſe following particulars.

1. Surely we need not be aſhamed of a crucified Chriſt, nor our Chriſtian paſſover this day, the Lamb that was ſacrificed for us. Since now the Lamb is upon the throne, and in the midſt of the throne, the ſhame and reproach of the croſs is wiped away, with the glory and ſplendor of the throne. We need not be aſhamed of the croſs of Chriſt, who is now in the midſt of the throne. Let none deſpiſe thoſe that eſpouſe the cauſe and intereſt of the Lamb, whatever hardſhips they may be brought under before courts, councils, and judicatories on earth: they need not be aſhamed to go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. The great apoſtle Paul ſays, "God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." O believer, it is our greateſt glory to be bearing his croſs, who is now wearing the crown; to be followers of the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne.

2. Hence we may learn, that the church of God is ſafe, ſince the Lamb that is their Head is in the midſt of the throne. Believers in Chriſt are happy and ſafe; their Head and Huſband, their Lord and King is upon the throne: the militant church, the fighting remnant, are in no great danger while he hath the government. Perhaps there are ſome here, like Eli, whoſe hearts are trembling for the ark of God, and the work of God at this day, when ſo many axes and hammers are lifted up againſt the carved work of the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of God's houſe: but let this be matter of joy to their hearts, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne; and therefore, as he rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth, and over-rules all damage done to his houſe, ſo he will make it appear in the iſſue, that according to his word, "Upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence," Iſa. iv. 5.

3. Hence we may learn, that the enemies of Chriſt may have a quaking heart, ſince the Lamb, whom they deſpiſe, is in the midſt of the throne. His Father, that ſet him on the throne, hath ſaid, Pſal. lxxxix. 23. "I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate

hate him. The heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth ſet themſelves, and the rulers take counſel againſt the Lord and his Anointed, ſaying, Let us break their bands, and caſt their cords from us. But he that ſits in heaven ſhall laugh, the Lord ſhall have them in deriſion: having ſet his King upon his holy hill of Zion, he will break them in pieces with a rod of iron, and ſhall daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel, Pſal. ii. 1,—9. The Lord reigns, let the people tremble; he dwells between the cherubims, let the earth be moved," Pſal. xlix. 1. The Lamb being in the midſt of the throne, is matter of terror to the enemies of his glory; for he ſits upon the throne of power, and the Lamb will be a Lion to tear them in pieces.

4. Hence we may learn, that there is a ſure foundation laid for the faith and hope of life and juſtification by the blood of the Lamb. Since the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, the throne of grace is a door of hope; and, that our hearts may be raiſed and lifted up to lively hope, the Lamb that was ſlain is raiſed and lifted up to the throne. Did he riſe again for our juſtification? and does his reſurrection ſeal upon our conſciences the ſufficiency of his death, and the acceptableneſs of his righteouſneſs unto God? Much more may our faith and hope be confirmed herein, that he is exalted to the midſt of the throne; for his Father had never put ſo much honour upon him, had he not been infinitely well-pleaſed and ſatisfied with his obedience unto the death. We may now read the dream that Jacob had at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 12. "Behold, a ladder ſet upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:" the ladder is the Lamb; the foot of the ladder was fixt in the midſt of the earth, when he was here in a humbled eſtate; and now the top of the ladder is fixed in the midſt of the throne: all the rounds of it are completed, that we may aſcend by this way from earth to heaven.

5. Hence we may learn, what good reaſon there is for having a high eſteem of Chriſt, ſince God hath ſo highly exalted him, to the very midſt of the throne. O believer, ſhould not Chriſt be high in our valuation, when God hath ſet him ſo high! No wonder then that

it is ſaid, "If any man love not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA;" that is, 'accurſed until our Lord come,' 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Wo will be to them that will not put honour upon him, whom God the Father put ſo much honour upon, and that as our Redeemer and kinſman!

6. Hence learn, the throne of God needs not be terrible unto us, ſince the Lamb, the meek Lamb, is in the midſt of the throne; ſinners need not fear to go to the throne of God, as long as the Lamb is there. If unbelief look toward the throne, it views it only as it is the throne of God, and ſo fills the ſoul with ſlaviſh fear, and frightful apprehenſions: but true faith views it as the throne of God and of the Lamb; and the views of the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, raiſes ſome joy, hope, and pleaſure in the midſt of the heart. Why, there is meekneſs as well as majeſty; grace, as well as grandeur, about the throne, becauſe the Lamb is there.

7. Hence we may learn what ground there is to expect the great God to be preſent in the midſt of us this day, becauſe the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. We would have no ground to expect that God would be with us on the foot-ſtool, if Chriſt were not with God upon the throne. Chriſt promiſed, upon his aſcending to the throne, that he would be with his people, ſaying, "Lo, I am with you always," Mat. xxviii. 20. He promiſed, when he went up to the throne, he would ſend down his Spirit; "If I go away, I will ſend him," John xvi. 8. Therefore, if he be by his Spirit in the midſt of us this day, it is becauſe he is in the midſt of the throne. It is eaſy for him to be both ſitting glorioufly in the midſt of the throne, and at the ſame time walking graciouſly in the midſt of the golden candleſticks, Rev. ii. 1. He is both the bleſt Λόγος, the Word of God; and the bleſt Immanuel, God with us. The ſeven ſpirits are ſaid to be before the throne. The Spirit of God is one, but his gifts, operations, and influences are various: and the Lamb, that is in the midſt of the throne, hath the Spirit to give; and having ſaid that he will ſend him, O let us look to the throne, and thence expect the Spirit according to his word.

8. Hence

8. Hence we may learn what is the mark of a worthy communicant, namely, if he be a true believer of this doctrine, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. "Let a man examine himſelf upon this, and ſo let him eat." I aſk not if you ſay you believe, or think you believe; but I call and enjoin you to try, if you truly believe that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. For helping you to this ſearch, you may conſider two things, namely, what view you have of this truth, and what virtue you find in it.

(1.) What view you have of this truth? If you truly believe it, then you view it with approbation. Is your heart ſatisfied that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne? Do you cordially approve of the Father's ſetting him ſo high? Did it ever fill your heart with joy and ſatisfaction, and with ſome ſecret pleaſure and exultation, that God hath put ſuch honour upon Jeſus? And have you thus received this truth in the love of it, and in the ſweetneſs of it? O did ever your heart leap, as it were, within you, to think that the throne of God is alſo the throne of the Lamb, and ſo a throne open to you to come boldly unto by the blood of the Lamb, that encircles the throne like a rainbow? How does your heart ſtand affected to this truth? "With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs," Rom. x. 10.

(2.) What virtue have you found in this truth for leading you to enthrone Chriſt, as the Father hath done? As the Father hath ſet the Lamb in the midſt of the throne of glory; ſo, have you ſet him in the midſt of the throne of your heart? Is he, that is in the midſt of the throne of God, in the midſt of the throne with you? Surely, *To them that believe he is precious* [or an *honour*], as the word may be read, 1 Pet. ii. 7. And they put this honour upon him, even to ſet him in the midſt of the throne. O my dear friends, let me tell you, that by this you may try and examine yourſelf, and prove your ownſelf, whether Chriſt be in you: if he be in you at all, he will be in the midſt of the throne. You are not fit for a communion-table, and at your peril be it if you go, and yet ſome other thing than Chriſt hath the throne of your heart: if ſelf be in the midſt of the throne, if

the world be in the midſt of the throne, if your luſts be in the midſt of the throne, Chriſt is not in you. It is true, the heart of the believer, while here, is not quite free of ſin, and ſelf, and the world: they may fight for the throne, and many times they may be ſeen to win the throne of their heart; but ſure I am, they never got peaceable poſſeſſion of the throne of their heart. The believer is free from peace with ſin, though he is never free from war with ſin in this world: his league with it is broken, he can never conſent to its rule and government any more: and hence, whenever ſin uſurps the throne, like Adonijah, then the believer enters his proteſt againſt it before the King of kings, ſaying, "Lord, haſt thou not ſaid, that Solomon ſhall reign?" Haſt thou not promiſed, that grace ſhall reign, and that ſin ſhall not have dominion? O down, down with this uſurper; and let Chriſt have his own proper room and place, which is the midſt of the throne. Hath virtue come from the throne of the Lamb to enable you to enthrone Chriſt in the midſt of your heart? Hath he the throne of your eſteem, the throne of your delight, the throne of your affection? Felt you ever any virtue coming down from the throne of Chriſt, to dethrone ſin, and to draw your heart up to the throne of God? Did you ever find ſo much grace deſcending from the throne, as to make your hearts aſcend to the throne? And is it the view of the Lamb's being there, that fires your heart, and makes it flame upward to the very midſt of the throne where he is? Again,

Laſtly, Hence we may learn the duty of ſinners that hear this doctrine of the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne. I think it is your duty, yea, ſure I am it is your duty, to come and ſee the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, to come and match with the Lamb, and then to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb.

(1.) It is your duty to come and ſee this great ſight, the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne. If the queſtion be, Where is the Lamb? The anſwer is, In the midſt of the throne. But if the queſtion again be, Where is the throne, that we may ſee it, and the Lamb in the midſt of it? We anſwer, God's throne of glory is properly in hea-

heaven; but his throne of grace is really on earth, as well as in heaven; it is erected in the church, and in this goſpel-diſpenſation, declaring that God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf. A God in Chriſt is a throne of grace every-where, and a glorious throne every-where is the place of our ſanctuary, Jer. xvii. 12. Hence, when the apoſtle ſays, 'Let us come boldly to the throne,' he does not mean locally climbing up to heaven, but believingly approaching to God in Chriſt, as held forth in the goſpel of his grace. Why then, as Chriſt is in the midſt of the throne, ſo the throne is in the midſt of this houſe.

Queſt. What will we ſee, if we come and ſee the Lamb in the midſt of the throne?

Anſw. You will ſee that the throne of God is patent to ſinners, becauſe the Lamb is there; and that there is acceſs with boldneſs from all quarters, at every ſide of the throne, becauſe the Lamb is in the midſt of it. The blood of the Lamb encircles the throne, and ſprinkles the mercy-ſeat; and therefore guilty ſinners may come, through this guilt-expiating blood. Here you will ſee the moſt dreadful attributes of God diveſted of all their dread and terror, and appearing amiable. Infinite holineſs and infinite juſtice are awful attributes, and both are upon the throne of God, but the Lamb is in the midſt of them: holineſs is gratified, juſtice is ſatisfied, every attribute is glorified; "Mercy and truth meet together, righteouſneſs and peace kiſs each other;" and all harmoniouſly conſpire, becauſe the Lamb is in the midſt of them. The mildeſt attributes would be dreadful to ſinners, if the Lamb were not in the midſt of them; but the moſt terrible attributes are amiable and lovely, when you ſee the Lamb in the midſt of them.

Here you will ſee the moſt terrible diſpenſations of God ſmiling in your face, when you ſee the Lamb in the midſt of them: for, though clouds and darkneſs are round about him, yet righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitations of his throne. He that rides in heaven by his name JAH, and makes the clouds his chariots, as he ſits in the midſt of his throne; ſo he ſits in the midſt of the cloudy and dark diſpenſations of our day, to order and over-

rule.

rule. Black clouds are over the church of Scotland, and the government, as it is in the hands of men, is all in diſorder and confuſion, and turned up-ſide-down *; but, if you ſee the Lamb in the midſt of theſe diſpenſations, you will ſee that the government is upon his ſhoulders; and that not only juſtice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, but that juſtice and judgment ſit with mercy and grace; and God hath ſome glorious deſign on foot, however terrible to his enemies, yet merciful to all the followers of the Lamb.

In a word, here you will ſee all the glory of God, when you ſee the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. O the throne of glory is a throne of grace, becauſe the Lamb is there; the throne of juſtice is a throne of mercy, becauſe the Lamb is there; the throne of infinite holineſs is acceſſible by guilty ſinners, becauſe the Lamb is there. O come and ſee.

(2.) It is your duty to come and match with the Lamb. O ſinner, who hath been married to the devil hitherto, married to your luſts, married to the world; O man, woman, whether old or young, will you come and be the bride, the Lamb's wife? as the word is, Rev. xix. 7. Let none dare to go to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb, to the communion-table, until once they have given their heart and hand to the Son of God, and joined in marriage with the Lamb; and, O may this be a marriage-day. It is a great part of our work to court a bride for the Lamb, and then to lead her to the table; and, O may drawing power come from the throne, to draw out many hearts after him! O ſinner, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, is come to court your heart, ſaying, *My ſon give me thy heart;* and he is come to offer himſelf to thee, man; to thee, woman, ſaying, *Behold me, behold me: come to me, that you may have life.* What

* Matters in the church, at this time, had a very diſmal aſpect; errors of the moſt pernicious conſequence abounding; impieties of the groſſeſt nature prevailing; incroachments upon the Lord's heritage, of the moſt grievous kind, taking place; as obſerved, Vol. I. p. 232. Vol II. p. 304. 466. Vol. IV. p. 148. Vol. V. p. 298. And yet the ſword of diſcipline drawn forth with more keeneſs againſt thoſe who faithfully teſtified againſt theſe evils, than againſt the authors, perpetrators, and promoters of them; as may be ſeen *above*, p. 359.

for

for a match would you have? Would you not be well married, and happy in ſuch a Huſband to all eternity?

1. Are you for an honourable match, a royal match? O here is the King of kings, the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; The Head of all principalities and powers.

2. Are you for a rich and opulent match? Here is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, in whom are hid unſearchable riches, and all the fulneſs of the Godhead; everlaſting treaſures of grace and glory.

3. Are you for a bountiful match? O there is none like the Lamb in the midſt of the throne for a generous ſpirit, willing and ready to lay out all his riches, that out of his fulneſs ye may receive, and grace for grace.

4. Are you for a beautiful match? Behold the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, the King in his beauty; he is white and ruddy, and altogether lovely: no wonder, for he is the brightneſs of his Father's glory: all the glory of God ſhines in his face. Some of God's glory ſhines in the works of creation, the ſun, moon, and ſtars; ſome of it in the works of providence: but all the glory of God is here. He is the temple of God, and there doth beauty ſhine, Pſalm xcvi. 6.

5. Are you for a loving, as well as a lovely match? Behold the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne is a mirror of love, without all dimenſion: "O the height and depth, the length and breadth of his love!" He loved and prayed for his enemies that murdered him; and how then muſt he love his friends that will match with him? Again,

6. Are you for a beloved match, who is valued and eſteemed of all whoſe love and eſteem is worth the regarding? O! the Lamb in the midſt of the throne is beloved of all the holy angels, they admire and adore him; he is beloved of all the ſaints in heaven and earth; they ſay, This is our Beloved; he is beloved of God the Father, who ſays, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed:" he is hated of none but the devil and his wicked crew.

7. In a word, are you for an immortal match? Well, here is the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne; he lives for ever and ever: "I am he that was dead, and am alive; and, behold, I live for evermore." The beſt friends

here

here in this world are mortal, and may leave you in a moment; but the Lamb is the King eternal, immortal: he lives for ever, and he can make you live for ever and ever. O mortal worms, whoſe bodies will be laid in the duſt in a few days or hours, and who have nothing but a thin wall of fleſh between you and eternity; are ye for a match that can abundantly jointure you for another world, and portion you for eternity? Is this a deſpicable bargain? Are your luſts and idols, and periſhing vanities of a world, a better bargain? Nay, you dare not ſay it for your life. This offer of Chriſt, accept or reject it as you will, is worth ten thouſand worlds.

8. Are you for a match that can pay all your debt to law and juſtice, that can ſupply all your wants, that can heal all your diſeaſes, that can bear all your burdens, ſanctify all your croſſes, ſweeten all your afflictions, ſubdue all your enemies, manage all your concerns, and make you happy for ever? Then come and match with the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne: a greater offer cannot be made to you than this moſt glorious King, upon the moſt glorious throne. O great propoſal! Wonder men and angels, at this goſpel-offer! Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens and earth! If ſuch a matchleſs match be offered and rejected, all the angels and ſaints that are about his throne will cry, Shame upon you for ever, that reject and refuſe ſuch a bargain; and we muſt ſay, Amen; everlaſting ſhame muſt be upon you. What was the Gadarenes blaſphemy, but their preferring their ſwine to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when he was upon the earth, and not yet upon the throne? But greater is your blaſphemy, O ſinner, if you prefer your ſwiniſh luſts to our glorious Lord, now exalted to the throne. What! prefer the ſwine, that are in the midſt of the dunghill, to the Lamb in the midſt of the throne! O baſe, brutiſh, mad, and deviliſh blaſphemy.

I hope, by this time, there are none hearing me, but are ſo far ſelf-convicted, that they ſee they muſt condemn themſelves if they reject ſuch an offer as is made to them; and therefore, I take witneſs upon it, that when the Lamb, that is now in the midſt of the throne of grace, will

will be the Lamb in the midſt of the throne of judgment at the laſt day, ye muſt own that the ſentence of condemnation, that ſhall be then paſt againſt you, will be juſt and righteous, if you ſtand to your refuſal: therefore, though this ſhould be a rejected offer to-day, yet it ſhall redound to the honour of the Lamb at the great day, inſomuch, that the condemnation of you will be the juſtification of him; your own conſciences witneſs that he will be juſt when he ſpeaks, and clear when he judges, and adjudges you to hell and damnation, becauſe of your neglecting the great ſalvation, and rejecting the offer of the great Saviour, the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne. By way of anticipation, the tribunal is now erected before-hand in your boſom, where God's deputy, conſcience, ſits as the judge; and there the Lamb is abſolved as free of your blood, and the ſentence comes forth, that your blood is upon your own head. Well, I hope your judgment is perſuaded of this, that ſuch an offer is made to you, as is worthy of all acceptation: but, O Sirs, ſince the judgment may be informed and gained, while yet the heart is not engaged; therefore, though faith come by hearing what a worthy Lamb is offered to you, yet bare hearing will not do without the heart-drawing power of the Spirit which is before the throne: and therefore, this being the pure cryſtal river, that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, Rev. xxii. 32. that this river of drawing influences of the Spirit may run down among you, I will put the beſt rope in your hand that I know for bringing down this bleſſing; it is even the Lamb's own ſweet promiſe, John xii. 32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men after me." Where obſerve, 1. The perſons concerned. 2. The promiſe. And, 3. The condition of it.

[1.] The perſons concerned, *all men.* There is an *All* among ſinful men, that Chriſt the ſecond Adam hath to draw to him; theſe were given of the Father to him; and they *ſhall come*, John vi. 37. Yea, theſe he *muſt bring* to him, John x. 16. He muſt draw them, and they ſhall hear his voice. But, leſt any ſhould hereupon ſay, Perhaps I am not among the number of the ſecond

Adam's

Adam's *all*, that he is to draw; perhaps I am excluded by the ſecret council, or hidden decree of God from all eternity. Therefore, I will tell you what may ſatisfy you fully upon this point, that the Lamb, that is now in the midſt of his Father's throne, was in the midſt of his Father's counſels from all eternity; the Lamb was at that council-table: therefore, let not the thoughts of the eternal decree be terrible and dreadful to you; for the Lamb was upon the concert, and therefore nothing paſt at that council to the prejudice of any poor ſinner, that would venture his ſoul upon the blood of the Lamb. It was concerted there, that the ground and object of faith ſhould be no hidden counſel, no paſt decree, but a preſent openly declared truth; namely, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne; and that whoſoever will might come to him; and him that comes, he will in no wiſe caſt out: and, therefore, if you venture your life and ſalvation upon the Lamb that is at preſent upon the throne of grace, you have nothing either paſt or future to fear; neither any paſt decree, or any future wrath: and now, by this free offer of Chriſt to you all, God is accompliſhing his glorious decree, that you may be for ever happy upon your acceptance, or for ever inexcuſable upon your refuſal.

[2.] The promiſe, which is, "I will draw all men unto me." In caſe any ſhould ſay, There is indeed a free offer, and a good bargain; but I have a reluctant as well as a deceitful heart; I cannot embrace the offer, nor bring up my heart to cloſe with Chriſt, and make up the match. Why, here is the encouraging promiſe, *I will draw;* that is, I will ſend the Spirit to draw out your heart, to make it riſe and mount, like a flame, towards the throne, where the Lamb ſits. But, if I do not find this drawing power, what encouragement have I to look for it? Why, obſerve,

[3.] The condition of this promiſe, *If I be lifted up from the earth.* Not an uncertain condition, depending upon us, but a ſure condition, depending upon himſelf: "If I be lifted up, or when I am lifted up." Now, the condition is performed; Chriſt was not only lifted up upon *the croſs*, but now he is lifted up to the throne. Now,

Chriſt

Chriſt ſaid, John xvi. 8. "If I go to the Father, I will ſend the Spirit;" if I go to the throne, I will ſend down the Spirit in his drawing influences. And now, may you not plead, "Lord, the condition is performed, the time is come, thou art lift up, thou art upon the throne; therefore, let the cryſtal river run down out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb?" Is this the language of your heart and ſoul? Lord, draw, draw; thou that art the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, draw my heart to thee, according to thy word. Is your heart burning or beating, ſaying, "O I am the blackeſt, the vileſt ſinner that ever matched with ſuch a glorious One; but yet I find my heart beating and burning within me, ſaying, O to be drawn; O to have the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne to erect his throne in the midſt of my heart, and to rule there in the midſt of his enemies; and to be all in all to me; for wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption to me:" Why then, we may ſay, your heart is the throne, and the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. And, if the drawing power of his Spirit hath made up the match between him and you, we are warranted to lead you next to the marriage-ſupper, where *The Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed you.*

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A WORD at the Cloſe of the SOLEMNITY on the Monday.

BEFORE you go, I ſhall conclude this ſolemn work in two words, one directed to the enemies of the Lamb, and another to the lovers of the Lamb in the midſt of the throne.

Firſt, To you who are enemies to him. If the Lamb be in the midſt of the throne, then let ſinners ſtoop to him; O ſink down at his feet, and be content to be ruled by him: if you be ruled by your own luſts, and by your ſins, you put Chriſt out of his throne in effect, and put your luſts in his room. O ſinner, conſider how you

croſs

croſs, and contradict the great God by this means: he hath ſaid of Chriſt, Pſal. ii. 6. "I have ſet my King upon mine holy hill;" I have ſet him in the midſt of the throne: and, are you ſaying to your luſts, Be ye king over me? Man, will you live in ſin, and ſin againſt him that is in the midſt of God's throne? If a thief cut a purſe when the judge is upon the bench, and the ſentence ready to paſs againſt him, he is worthy to be hanged: Chriſt is on the bench, in the act of judgment; O man, beware of ſinning againſt him: be afraid, O ye that are enemies to the Lamb, "Enemies in you minds by wicked works: It is hard for you to kick againſt the pricks:" Can you harden yourſelf againſt God, and proſper? Nay, you ſhall be ſo far from proſpering in this way, that the Lamb in the midſt of the throne hath a rod of iron, to break and daſh you to pieces. "Conſider this, ye that forget God." The Lamb will in a little be a lion, to tear you to pieces, when there ſhall be none to deliver. The Lamb is yet upon the throne of grace, inviting you; but it may be this is the laſt invitation you ſhall have, till you ſee him upon a judgment-ſeat: and what ſhall be the effect of theſe goſpel-offers you have enjoyed? Theſe ſolemn feaſts will not always laſt; and perhaps death will daſh you down to the duſt before another occaſion of this ſort. Can ye find in your heart to let Chriſt go, and this occaſion over, without getting any good of him? Are you content that ſalvation hath come ſo near you, and you loſe it for ever? If not, O will ye take the firſt opportunity of retiring to ſome corner, and cry to the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, to come and draw you, and back theſe precious means with his powerful bleſſing! He that is in the midſt of the throne hath been ſetting his throne in the midſt of Dunfermline, and ſaying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men!" O let him not lift his tent till you be taken in!

Again, O crown him King whom the Father hath crowned! O might this be his coronation-day! A day of eſpouſals with the Lamb is his coronation-day: "Go forth, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his eſpouſals, and in the day of the gladneſs of his

his heart," Song iii. 11. Happy day, if you could go away, ſaying, Such a day, at the communion of Dunfermline, Chriſt was crowned King; I beheld King Jeſus with the crown wherewith his Father crowned him, and ſaw that the Father ſet him in the midſt of the throne, and I helped to put the crown upon his head; for, through grace, I ſet him in the midſt of the throne of my heart, and crowned him King there: I found in my heart to dethrone ſin, and enthrone Chriſt. O is Chriſt crowned King here! Hath no virtue come from the throne to draw my heart, as the adamant draws the iron? The clucking of the hen makes the chickens to run; goſpel-preaching is the voice of the Lord Jeſus; and much of this you have had theſe days bygone. O have you run under his wings? See what Chriſt ſays to Jeruſalem, Matth. xxiii. 37, 38. "O Jeruſalm, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate!" May we hope that God will not yet leave Scotland deſolate, but that Chriſt will be crowned King in the church of Scotland? Though he be robbed of his royalties, and notwithſtanding of all unwarrantable Acts that tend to the hurt of his government, he is in the midſt of the throne.

2*dly*, To you that are the lovers of the Lamb, I offer firſt a word of comfort, and then a word of advice.

[1.] A word of comfort. Surely though the earth ſhould be removed, and the mountains be caſt into the midſt of the ſea; though external governments ſhould be diſſolved and overturned, yet, while the Lamb is upon the throne, all ſhall be ruled to advantage unto all the lovers of the Lamb. What though ye ſhould ſee the miniſters of Chriſt ſuſpended * or depoſed for adhering to the teſtimony of Chriſt, and endeavouring to keep a good conſcience in an evil day? Though they ſhould be reproached and perſecuted, yet ſtill "There is a river,

* Alluding to the conduct of the Aſſembly and Commiſſion, in the proſecution carrying on at this time againſt Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE, and his adherents. As this affair is frequently hinted at, it may not be improper here briefly to lay the matter open.—The Church, at this time, was not only in imminent danger of being over-run with a pernicious ſcheme of Arian-

the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God:" and ſtill there is this great ground of comfort, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, and the chryſtal river proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb; and upon this throne the Lamb rules righteouſly and mercifully, tho' men rule never ſo unjuſtly and cruelly; and in a little time there will be an end of man's rule and government, but the Lamb's dominion is for ever and ever. God the Father hath proclaimed that he is the everlaſting King, ſaying, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The followers of the Lamb have unſpeakable ground of comfort in Chriſt, whatever trouble they have in the world; "In the world you ſhall have tribulation, but in me you ſhall have peace, be of good

Socinian and Arminian doctrines, as formerly noticed. Vol. I p. 232. Vol. II. p. 304. 466. Vol. IV. p. 146.; but likewiſe of being peſted with a corrupt, erroneous, and time-ſerving miniſtry, for whom a wide door had been opened by ſeveral violent ſettlements on reclaiming congregations: The number of legal ſermons and dry moral harangues too evidently evinced the truth of it; and the eager diſpoſition appearing in many to graſp at Preſentations, and the Act of Aſſembly 1732, in favours of them (obſerved above, p. 298 351.), put the fact beyond all diſpute. This being the melancholy ſituation of matters at this time, Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE, Miniſter at Stirling, thought it his duty, in a ſermon, at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, at Perth, Oct. 10th. 1732, to teſtify plainly againſt ſome of the prevailing evils of the times, particularly againſt the Act of Aſſembly 1732, and the proceedings of the Judicatories, in the ſettlement of miniſters over reclaiming and diſſenting congregations. This diſcourſe ſo galled and tormented ſome of the miniſters then preſent, that they puſhed, and obtained of the Synod, an appointment of a Committee to conſider the particulars in the ſermon, ſaid to give offence. The expreſſions were condeſcended on, and anſwers given to them by Mr. Erſkine. The Synod, after ſpending three days on this affair, found Mr. Erſkine cenſurable, and reſolved to rebuke him; from which ſeveral miniſters and elders diſſented: and Mr. Erſkine and Mr. Fiſher proteſted, and appealed to the Aſſembly 1733. The Aſſembly having conſidered the Appeal, approved of the proceedings of the Synod, and appointed him to be rebuked and admoniſhed by the Moderator; though neither Synod nor Aſſembly had ſhown his doctrine to be contrary to the word of God and our Standards. Mr. Erſkine proteſted againſt this deed: and his Proteſtation was adhered to by Meſſrs. Wilſon, Moncrief, and Fiſher. The Aſſembly ordered the foreſaid Miniſters to appear before the Commiſſion in Auguſt; and impowered the Commiſſion to ſuſpend them, if they did not withdraw their Proteſtation, and profeſs their ſorrow. They appeared before the Commiſſion in Auguſt, and were ſuſpended by them. The Commiſſion in Nov. 16. looſed their relation to their reſpective charges, and declared them to be no longer Miniſters of this Church. The Aſſembly 1740, paſſed the ſentence of Depoſition againſt them, and others who adhered to them, and joined with them: and all this, without finding them either erroneous in doctrine, or immoral in practice; but merely for their ſtedfaſt adherence to their principles, and miniſterial fidelity, in ſetting the trumpet to their mouth, and telling the houſe of Jacob their ſins, and Iſrael their tranſgreſſions!—Theſe who incline to ſee more of this matter, may peruſe Mr. Erſkine's printed Sermon, which was the foundation of this proceſs, together with the State of the Proceſs, and other public papers emitted to the world.

chear; I have overcome the world;" and I am now upon the throne; and ye at laſt ſhall overcome, and ſit down with men on my throne.

1. Here is comfort againſt deſertion. Though the Lord may hide himſelf, and ſeem to be far away, yet ſtill it is food to your faith, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne; and, as he never deſerts the throne, ſo he will never leave you, nor forſake you: Why? The promiſes are all Yea and Amen in him who is ever upon the throne, to make out his word.

2. Here is comfort againſt the croſs. While you have the croſs upon your back, you may keep the throne in your eye, and you may be ſure of pity and favour thence, becauſe the Lamb is there, who went from the croſs to the throne.

3. Here is comfort againſt the power of ſin, corruption, and ſpiritual enemies, be they never ſo powerful: for the Lamb is upon the throne of power, and all power in heaven and earth is given to him; and he is concerned in honour to deſtroy theſe enemies.

4. Here is comfort againſt want and weakneſs. Your ſtrength lies in the Lamb, and your ſpiritual proviſion flows only from him.

5. Here is comfort againſt church-tyranny. Times have been, when there was tyranny in the ſtate over the conſciences of men; theſe were reckoned very evil days: but, when there is tyranny in the church, over the conſciences of men, it is in many reſpects worſe: for church-perſecution is a kind of blaſphemy; it is in the name of God to perſecute the people of God. But yet here is comfort in this caſe, that church-tyranny cannot keep the throne; "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowſhip with thee, which frameth miſchief by a law?" No, no: "They gather themſelves together againſt the ſoul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood," Pſal. xciv. 20, 21. The Lamb will keep the midſt of the throne, and tread down his enemies in due time.

What would make a church-government glorious and eminent? When the Lamb is kept in the midſt of the throne, and when his ſpiritual kingdom is kept diſtinct from the temporal kingdoms of this world. The government of the church is quite miſmanaged when the Lamb

is put out of the throne, and temporal heritages are made the foundation of ſpiritual privileges: As for example, when in the choice of paſtors to any congregation, which is a ſpiritual privilege, relating to immortal ſouls, the heritors of this earth, the heirs of a little yellow duſt, have ſuch a privilege and preference given them by virtue of their temporal inheritance, as if they were lords over the conſciences of men, and lords over God's heritage: ſurely their ſecular advantage in the world can entitle them to no ſpiritual privilege in the houſe of God, no more than an earthly inheritance can entitle them to heaven: but to give them a dominion over the ſouls of men in this matter, is a practical dethroning of the Lamb from the midſt of the throne. Church-officers themſelves are diſcharged to uſurp ſuch a dominion as to be lords over God's heritage: it is unlawful for them to obtrude paſtors upon a Chriſtian people without their conſent; far leſs have they power to put ſuch a dominion over mens conſciences into the hands of earthly ſuperiors. How can they give what they have not themſelves *? In ſpiritual matters we are to own no man lord, but he that is "Lord of lords, the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne." Church-government is quite overturned, when the throne of Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom is poſſeſt by any other in this world but only the Lamb.

6. Here is comfort againſt death. Death ſhall not reign, becauſe the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, and liveth for ever and ever, and hath the keys of hell and of death; and therefore death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory.

7. Here is comfort againſt the fear of judgment; that awful day needs be no terror to the lovers of the Lamb, becauſe, when the fiery tribunal will be erected, the Lamb will be in the midſt of the throne; and the friends of the Lamb will be received into his boſom, while all his enemies will ſtand trembling before his throne.

8. Here is comfort in the view of a long eternity, that

* Patronage has always been a great grievance to the church, and was carried on at this time with a very high hand, though contrary to Scripture, Reaſon, our Standards, and Acts of the Church; particularly Act of Aſſembly at Glaſgow, 1638, as obſerved above, p. 298. 351.

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the Lamb, that is for ever in the midſt of the throne, will for ever feed you, and lead you unto living fountains, and wipe away all tears from your eyes. O! who can tell the happineſs of the higher houſe, the glorious feeding and leading you ſhall have there, the everlaſting and ever-living fountain of divine conſolation, wherewith ye ſhall for ever be refreſhed! The fountain is God, and his glorious attributes; Chriſt, and his inexhauſtible fulneſs; the Spirit, and his everlaſting conſolation; a glorious Trinity: God, who is now a promiſing God, will then be a performing God. Who can tell the ſweetneſs of that bleſſing, his wiping away all tears from your eyes? He that hath a bottle for your tears now, hath a napkin to wipe them all away then; for, Ye ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away.

Secondly, I offer a word of advice to you. O Sirs, if the Lamb be in the midſt of the throne,

1. Then be quiet amidſt all the mal-adminiſtrations of men, amidſt all the miſmanagements of church-men and church-judicatories; becauſe, though men cannot be juſtified in their church-ruining projects, yet the Lamb being in the midſt of the throne, hath a juſt, holy, and ſovereign hand in ordering theſe evils, when he hath a controverſy to plead with us. Let us ſee the hand of God in leaving men to themſelves, to rob the church and people of God of their rights and Reformation-privileges. What was the hand of Pilate againſt Chriſt, the cruelleſt act that ever was done? Why, it was the hand of God himſelf: for it is ſaid, when Pilate ſpake, ſaying, "Doſt thou not know that I have power to crucify thee, or to ſet thee at liberty?" Chriſt anſwered, "Thou couldſt have no power, except it were given thee of my Father." Even ſo ſay I, church-men or church-judicatories, courts or aſſemblies, could have no power to break down any of the carved work of Reformation; no power to harm the liberties of God's people in chuſing their paſtors; no power to obtrude miniſters on Chriſtian congregations, willing to chuſe faithful paſtors; no power to paſs ſentence againſt ſuch as oppoſe that ſpeat of defection, except it were given them of our Father; and therefore, let us be quiet and ſober: we have ſome other

thing adoth than to break out in a paſſionate reſentment againſt poor mortal men; the ſinful inſtruments of the church's confuſion and diſorder. When Shimei railed upon David, "Let him alone, ſays David, may be the Lord hath bidden him." The Lord, for our trial and chaſtiſement, perhaps hath required ſome in our day, Go and tread upon the rights of theſe people; go and reproach and perſecute, ſuſpend and depoſe theſe miniſters, for keeping a good conſcience in an evil time: I ſay, it may be the Lord hath bidden; yea, "Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Is there evil in the church, and the Lord hath not done it? No, no: Well, what of that? This does not juſtify evil inſtruments, no; but it ſays, we are to be ſober, and lay our hand upon our mouth, and bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe we have ſinned againſt him: We are to be dumb, and not to open our mouth, becauſe he does it. The Lamb in the midſt of the throne hath the government upon his ſhoulders, and he is righteouſly ordering and over-ruling theſe matters for the profitable trial of his people, and the glorious praiſe of his name in the iſſue: "The wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, and the remainder of his wrath wilt thou reſtrain." The Lord hath his own time and way of reſtraining his enemies, and his own time and way of reforming his church; and when the Lord ſhall appear in his glory, he will build up Zion. Sometimes he ſees fit to appear in his wrath, and then he lets out the wrath of man, the enmity of man, to the breaking down of Zion, and of his carved work: but there is another time, when he ſees fit to appear in his glory, and then to reſtrain the wrath of man, and reform his church. And ſince he is appearing in his wrath in our day, letting out the reins of man's wrath, to the ruining of Reformation-work; O be ſober and humble; and depend upon him as the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, who hath the reins in his hand, to let them out, or take them in, as he pleaſes. Inſtruments are but his ſword, his hand, by which he does as he pleaſes, Pſal. xvii. 13, 14. "Deliver my ſoul from the wicked, from men which are thy hand, O Lord." Think not then the government is out of Chriſt's hand, when men are doing many ſad things, and giving many

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heavy blows to the work of God: No, no: men are but his hand; and it is the hand of God that juſtly and righteouſly is lying heavy upon his people.—Look above men then; you have not to do with them; there is a turn of matters juſt as he is pleaſed to turn his hand; the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, and in the midſt of heavy clouds hanging over Scotland; therefore look to him, that he may turn away his wrath; Pſal. ii. 12. "Kiſs the Son, leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him." Again,

2. If it is only the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne. O then be tender of thoſe that are followers of the Lamb, while they are yet upon the footſtool, and not yet ſet down with Chriſt upon his throne. They are in danger in an evil day, wherein they are called to give teſtimony againſt the evils and corruptions of the day, to go aſide to ſome extreme or other. There are many thoughts of heart, and many needleſs words among people at preſent about the manner of teſtifying. Some are accuſed as if they were too forward; others are accuſed as if they were too far behind, in their teſtimony. Well, not to meddle with miſtakes people may be under, it may be both theſe are true: for, who can ſay, I am clean, and do not err toward the right or left hand, when they would appear for Chriſt and his cauſe? But, O be tender of the militant followers of Chriſt. I hope you will remember, that it is only the Lamb that is able to keep the midſt of the throne; and, I hope, we are all willing to ſubſcribe to this, that this honour only belongs to him, that he was able to keep the midſt of the way to the throne, without going to one ſide or other: none but himſelf was ever able to do ſo; let him alone have all the glory.

3. Let me ſay to you that have become the bride, the Lamb's wife, If the Lamb be in the midſt of the throne, O then ſee that ye frequent the throne. What more inviting argument than this can there be, that the Lamb is in the midſt of it? And the farther forward you approach, ſo much the better. Never reſt till you be in the midſt of the throne, where the Lamb is. You may have boldneſs to go as far as the Lamb goes; and you

will find this the moſt pleaſant exerciſe in the world, and the moſt profitable alſo: for grace and mercy is about the throne of grace; it is a mercy-ſeat, becauſe the Lamb is there.

4. O believer, if the Lamb be in the midſt of the throne, even the Lamb, your Head, your Huſband, ſee that you live upon him by faith; let the Lamb be your feeder, and the Lamb your food every day: and beware you do not diſgrace your honourable Huſband. Are you married to the Lamb in the midſt of the throne? We read that Bathſheba ſaid to her ſon, Prov. xxxi. 4. "It is not for a king, O Lemuel, it is not for a king to drink wine, nor for princes to drink ſtrong drink." So it is not for believers in Chriſt to drink and tipple, to ſwear and cheat; the graceleſs world do ſo. But, O believer, have you been at a communion-table? Hath the Lord graced and honoured you with marriage to the Lamb in the midſt of the throne? Do not diſgrace yourſelf; it is below your rank: ſee that you live as becomes theſe that are matched and married to the Prince of the kings of the earth.

I remember ſome years ago, after certain diſputing in the Church about the doctrine of the goſpel, we had a ſolemnity here, on which occaſion I was led to ſpeak of the ſubſtance of goſpel-doctrine, Chriſt given of God to be a covenant of the people *; and now I am obliged to remark, That after ſome contendings, or rather, in the midſt of ſome contendings in the Church, about the government of his houſe, I have been led, without any deſign in me, but only as the text was pleaſant to my own ſoul, to ſpeak of the very ſum and centre of eccleſiaſtical government, the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. I remember, at that former occaſion the Lord was preſent by his Spirit, and gave evidence thereof unto many; and now, I hope, at this occaſion alſo there ſhall be ſome bleſſings dropt down from the throne. And, O to be going away from this place, with this truth ſealed upon our heart, concerning the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne: Come what will, there is no fear of the followers of the Lamb, and the ſufferers for him; for, *The Lamb is in the midſt of the throne.*

* See this elaborate diſcourſe in Vol. I. p. 162.

SERMON LXXXV.

STABILITY IN THE FAITH, THE CHURCH'S STRENGTH *.

ISA. XXX. 7.

—Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill.

EVER ſince man departed from God, the only reſting place, he has been, in vain, rambling among the creatures for ſafety and ſatisfaction; whereas, if we believe the word of God, we will ſee our only ſtrength and ſafety is to return to God in Chriſt, as the centre of reſt; and to ſit ſtill and reſt upon him, and put confidence in him; as ſaith the prophet here, *Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill.* Theſe who have been ſitting down at a communion-table, by profeſſing to ſit down under the ſhadow of the Almighty by faith, are to remember that it is their ſtrength to ſit ſtill; as they are well ſet, who can ſay with the church, "I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſte;" for, to ſit down, is to believe: ſo it is yet better, if, by unbelief, they do not riſe again; for, it is *their ſtrength to ſit ſtill.*

Jeruſalem and Judah were here threatened with ſome approaching dangers and deſolations, and it is thought to be by Sennacherib; and this peoples ſin, for which they are here reproved, was their truſting to the Egypti-

* This ſermon was preached in the year 1733.; but at what place, we are uncertain: However, from ſome paſſages in the diſcourſe, it appears to have been delivered on the Monday after ſome ſacramental ſolemnity.

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ans; they were all in a hurry to bring help and ſuccour from them, without ſeeking counſel of God, and reſting upon him.

We may obſerve in the words, the four following things.

1. The evil of this ſin; "The Egyptians ſhall help in vain, and to no purpoſe:" compare this with ver. 3. and hence obſerve, That though they that truſt in the power, providence, and promiſe of God ſhall never be aſhamed of their hope; yet they that put confidence in any creature, will find it their reproach, ſhame, and confuſion: they will hurt inſtead of helping. God is true, and may be truſted; but every man is a liar, and may be ſuſpected: we cannot expect too little from man, and too much from God.

2. Notice the prophet's intermeddling in this concerning matter, he publiſhes God's mind and commiſſion. Obſerve, it is the duty of miniſters to meddle ſometimes in public matters, whether in church or ſtate; they are to ſhow Jacob their ſins, and Iſrael their tranſgreſſions; and this is a part of miniſters work, to teſtify againſt ſin in all. Chriſt was the light of the world; they ſhould be like their Maſter, teſtifying againſt all ſin, and all works of darkneſs. However, this is one of the great quarrels that the world have againſt the ſervants and people of God, becauſe they bear teſtimony againſt their ſins. Many that have ſome light, yet they put their light in a priſon, Rom. i. 18. "They hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs;" particularly, by not bearing witneſs againſt ſin and defection in others, as well as in ourſelves; it was the graceleſs expreſſion of a graceleſs Cain, *Am I my brother's keeper?* What am I concerned with the ſouls of others, or the ſins of others? What am I concerned with the public evils of the day I live in? Indeed right religion begins at home, but it does not end there; it will come without doors with us.

3. The manner of the prophet's addreſs to this people, *I cried concerning this:* I CRIED; hence obſerve, That it is the duty of miniſters to be earneſt and zealous in reproving ſin and reclaiming ſinners. Miniſters are both ſeers and criers; and, when they ſee the danger, they

ſhould cry, that the people may hear, and flee out of harm's way. If one in the ſtreets of a city were crying, Fire, fire! O what a running and motion is then? But when miniſters cry, The fire of hell is ready to burn the wicked and ungodly, no perſon is moved; why? they are ſenſible of bodily danger, but no ſenſe have they of ſoul danger, nor fear of the fire that burns both ſoul and body. Miniſters need to cry about matters of eternity, that people may ſecure ſomething that death may not be able to take from them; ſuch as theſe, (1.) Saving knowledge; if you get this, it will lodge with you to eternity; "This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent." (2.) Faith, ſaving faith, death will not be able to take it from you; *All theſe died in faith.* Again, (3.) Evangelical love of God in Chriſt; *Love never fails.* (4.) The favour of God, Rom. viii. 38, 39. "I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, —ſhall ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus." (5.) Pardon of ſin, and waſhing in Chriſt's blood; "Theſe are they that have waſhed their robes in the blood of the Lamb." (6.) Faithful labours for the honour and glory of God; "Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, they ſhall reſt from their labours, and their works follow them." They enjoy the fruit of their labours; they will not loſe one good thought, one prayer, one tear; he has a bottle for theſe. Some ſeek after worldly honour, but theſe will ſoon be at an end; their honour will be laid in the duſt. Some ſpend their time and ſtrength in pleaſure; there theſe will ſoon be at an end, 1 John ii. 17. "The luſts of this world paſſeth away; but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever."

4. The prophet's doctrine, or the ſum of his preaching and advice, in theſe words, *Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill.*

In which words you may notice, 1. The ſedate life of faith, expreſſed by *ſitting ſtill.* 2. The advantages of that life of faith to believers, it is *their ſtrength.*

[1.] By *ſitting ſtill* we are to underſtand a recumbancy upon God, reſting on him, and truſting in him, and ſtedfaſt waiting on him, and abiding in the way of duty. This duty puts a man to leſs trouble than his rambling abroad among the creatures; he has no more ado but

ſit ſtill. Some are at more pains to bring miſery upon themſelves, than God's people are to get the bleſſing. Eſau hunted up and down, and was at a great deal of pains; yet Jacob ſat at home, and got the bleſſing: "He that believeth ſhall not make haſte."

[2.] The advantage of this duty, it is *their ſtrength:* they that ſit ſtill in a day of diſtreſs, "Hoping and quietly waiting for the ſalvation of the Lord," this will be their ſtrength and ſafety: when we have tired ourſelves by ſeeking help from creatures, we will find it the beſt way for recruiting ourſelves, to repoſe and ſettle upon the Creator; by truſting in him, waiting on him, and ſtedfaſtly adhering to him: this will keep us from much needleſs labour and fatigue; yea, it will ſecure to us the accompliſhment of the promiſe, Luke i. 45. "Bleſſed is he that believeth, for there ſhall be a performance." Hab. ii. 3. "For the viſion is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry."

This text then has two parts, that are like the two pillars of Solomon's temple, the one Jachin, and the other Boaz; ſtability and ſtrength; ſtability is one part of the text, and ſtrength is the other: *Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill.*

Obſerv. "That a church or peoples ſtrength and "ſafety in perilous times, is their ſteadineſs and "ſtability in the faith."

The prophet here ſpeaks forth the duty of Jeruſalem in a perilous and dangerous time, and ſhows, that that ſtability is their ſafety; and that it is ſtability in the faith, he here ſpeaks of, you may ſee clear, from two other verſes of this chapter, ver. 15. "In returning and reſt, ſhall ye be ſaved; in quietneſs and confidence ſhall be your ſtrength." In returning to God, and repoſing in him as your reſt, in quiet acquieſcing in him and confident dependance upon him. Ver. 18. "The Lord is a God of judgment, bleſſed are all they that wait for him:" this alſo explains it of the ſtability of faith.

This doctrine might be confirmed by many other ſcriptures, Heb. iii. 12. 14. "Take heed, brethren, leſt there

there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; for we are made partakers of Chriſt, if we hold the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſtly unto the end:" Importing, that our ſtability in the faith, is our ſafety in evil times, and at all times, Heb. x. 23. 25. "Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering; not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, but exhorting one-another, and ſo much the more as you ſee the day approaching." In Col. ii. 19. there you read of a number that fell off in time of temptation, *Not holding the head;* not ſitting ſtill and abiding in Chriſt. Heb. xiii. 8, 9. But many other ſcriptures will offer in the ſequel.

The method I propoſe for proſecuting this ſubject, through the divine favour, ſhall be the following.

I. To ſhow what are theſe times that may be called perilous times, wherein people are ready to ſhow much inſtability and unſtedfaſtneſs in the faith.
II. Open up the nature of this ſtedfaſtneſs and ſtability in the faith.
III. Show that this ſtedfaſtneſs and ſtableneſs is people's ſtrength and ſafety, in perilous times.
IV. Deduce ſome Inferences for the application of the ſubject.

I. We are to ſhow what are theſe times that may be called perilous times. You may ſee the apoſtle's deſcription thereof, 2 Tim. iii. 1,—8. "This know alſo, that perilous times ſhall come; for men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of theſe that are good, traitors, heedy, high-minded, lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God, having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof; from ſuch turn away. Now, as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes, ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." If the laſt times be the moſt perilous times, then we ſeem to be among the very laſt; we are called to redeem time, becauſe the days

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are evil. There is a twofold evil, moral and penal; the moral evil of ſin is the ground of all penal evil of puniſhment. Jeruſalem here was not ſo much in danger from the Aſſyrians, whom God was ſending upon them to puniſh them, as they were from their own ſins, for which God ſtirred up the enemy to afflict them; or if when danger appeared, they had returned to the Lord, and reſted on him; then in returning and reſting they had been ſaved: but they departed from God and then all went to wreck with them. Times of departing from God, the only reſting place, are perilous times. More particularly,

1*ſt*, Times of rebellion againſt God are perilous times. Of this, Jeruſalem is here reproved; and for this a wo is denounced againſt her, "Wo to the rebellious children," ver. 1. of this chapter. When may a people be called rebellious? Even when ſin, which is rebellion, is come to ſuch a height, that the Lord is obliged in honour to plead a controverſy with the ſinning people; as it is ſaid, Hoſ. iv. 1, 2, 3. "The Lord hath a controverſy with the inhabitants of the land, becauſe there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore ſhall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh with the beaſt of the fields, and with the fowls of heaven, yea the fiſhes of the ſea alſo ſhall be taken away." Now, he may be ſaid to have a controverſy with a land for their rebellions, in four caſes.

1. When all manner of ſin and acts of rebellion abound, ſuch as are there mentioned, ſo as they are not only the ſins of ſuch and ſuch a perſon, nor of ſuch and ſuch a congregation, but they are become national, and univerſal, and epidemical; and I imagine this is but too juſt a deſcription of our caſe.

2. When peoples ſins are committed againſt many checks of conſcience, many beams of light, many means of grace, many calls of providence, many inſtances of mercy and divine goodneſs; how provoking is it, as you ſee, Rom. ii. 2, 3. Thus highly aggravated againſt the *patience* and forbearance of God.

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3. When the rebellion is ſo heightened that not only is the patience of God abuſed, but laughed at, and ridiculed, by a profane age, that begin to ſay, as 2 Pet. iii. 4. *Where is the promiſe of his coming?* Where is the threatening of his coming to judgment? Then it is a perilous time, becauſe the Lord is angry, and will let men know that he is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, as ſome men count ſlackneſs, though he be long-ſuffering to us-ward; and that he is not ſlack concerning his threatening.

4. When there is nothing ſtanding between the rebellious people and the ſtroke, *None to ſtand in the gap*, and keep out the wrath that is coming in, Ezek. xxii. 30, 31. Or, when ſuch as would ſtand in the gap, and plead with God, have no acceſs to him this way; and when God is ſaying, upon the matter, though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were pleading for ſuch a people, it is in vain.

2*dly*, Times of carnal conſultation, or of following carnal counſel, are perilous times. This was the caſe of Jeruſalem, "Wo to the rebellious children, that take counſel, but not of me!" (Where alſo we ſee, that this was a ſpecial branch of their rebellion, they are reckoned rebels againſt God that take counſel, but not of him; and ſo follow their own carnal counſel.) Men take counſel, but not of God, when they conſult with fleſh and blood, with carnal eaſe, carnal friends, carnal reaſon, and are ſwayed with carnal arguments; when they conſult with numbers and multitudes, and follow the ſupernumerary party, and ſo bind their faith to the belt of a majority, ſaying, Can ſuch a great number be all wrong? and ſuch a ſmall number only right? Shall we be ſingular? Indeed, when vice becomes general, ſingularity is a virtue; when error in judgment, or practice, becomes univerſal, it is then a neceſſary duty to be ſingular. Whomſoever men take counſel with, if it be not with God, they rebel againſt him, and expoſe themſelves to wo and miſery. To take counſel even with learned and eminent men, even when they are in the right ſide of the queſtion, and to believe ſo and ſo, becauſe they believe, it is but a human faith, built upon a human teſtimony; and yet ordinarily the moſt learned Rabbies are

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the greateſt enemies of Chriſt and his cauſe, John vii. 48,49 "Have any of the rulers and Phariſees believed in him? But this people, that know not the law, are curſed." Why, ſays fleſh and blood, they are but a pack of ignorant fools, who differ from ſuch great and learned men. Well, but it may happen, that even theſe may be blind, whom neither themſelves nor others think to be ſo, as it was with the applauded Phariſees, who ſaid, *Are we blind alſo?* Chriſt proves them to be ſo; and tells, that if the blind follow the blind, both ſhall fall into the ditch. Thus alſo they take counſel, but not of God, that yield a blind obedience to the commandments of men, as Iſrael did to the ſtatutes of Omri, Mic. vi. 16. and Ephraim, that willingly walked after the commandment, Hoſ. v. 2. This is charged upon Iſrael, Iſa. xxix. 13. *Their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men.*

3*dly*, Times of carnal confidence and coverings, are perilous times, verſe 1. "They cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit." The ſhadow of Egygt was their covering; they put their confidence therein: but it was a refuge of lies, a covering too narrow for hiding them, while they had no holy confidence in God, but a carnal confidence in men; they departed from God, partly through fear of men, namely, the Aſſyrians, and partly by truſting in men, *viz.* the Egyptians. *The fear of man bringeth a ſnare.* And it is an awful word to that purpoſe, Iſa. li. 12, 13. "Who art thou, that thou ſhould be afraid of man, that ſhall die, and of the ſon of man, that ſhall be made as graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord, thy Maker, that ſtretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and haſt feared continually every day becauſe of the fury of the oppreſſor, as if he were ready to deſtroy? And where is the fury of the oppreſſor?" Many are like the Jews, John xii. 42. that durſt not profeſs Chriſt for fear of being laſhed out of the ſynagogue: and thus even ſome of the godly dare not make a public appearance for the cauſe and truth of the Lord Jeſus, for fear of being expoſed to the cenſures of the church, and fury of the prevailing party; but what ſays the Lord, in ſuch a caſe, to theſe that fear the reproaches, and revilings, and reſentment of men, Iſa. li. 7, 8. It is but the graſs of

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the field that oppoſeth you, *All fleſh is graſs*, Iſa. xl. 6. Are you afraid of withering graſs, and forget the everlaſting and everliving God? They may be reckoned fools that expoſe themſelves to the fury of a government, civil or eccleſiaſtic: why ſhould they expoſe themſelves to worldly loſſes and inconveniences? But, if the commands of men be not agreeable to the commands of God; if they be unlawful and unwarrantable, it is the beſt wiſdom to ſit ſtill, and reſt obedient to God, and diſobedient to man; yea, this is their ſtrength and ſafety: it is better to ſuffer than to ſin; and we ſin, if we but yield a doubtful obedience to man, doubting if it be right; for, "Whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin." It is always ſafeſt to keep back from ſin, and abide with Chriſt: all loſſes for his ſake are to be repaired an hundred fold in this life; that is good recompence, and the ſtock ſtill ſecure; "In the world to come, eternal life." However, this is one part of carnal confidence, the fear of man; for, whom we truly fear, for their frowns, them we are apt to truſt, for their favours and friendſhip. And then truſt in man, is another part of carnal confidence, which, when it prevails, ſhows it is a perilous time: this is croſs to the command of God alſo, Pſal. cxlvi. 3. "Put not your truſt in princes, nor in the ſons of men, in whom there is no help." This is dangerous work, and points out a dangerous time, when truſting in an arm of fleſh is prevailing, Jer. xvii. 5. "Curſed is the man, that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm; whoſe heart departs from the Lord. It is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put confidence in man." See Micah vii. 5. Jer. ix. 4. If we depend upon human power, for the preſervation of our church, or depend upon human policy, for the reformation of religion, we will find ourſelves ſadly diſappointed; "It is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put confidence in fleſh." If we depend upon human laws, even for the ſecurity of our fortunes; or upon our compliance with whatever human authority injoins, for our freedom from outward trouble and trials, we but truſt in man, and confer with fleſh and blood: we truſt in a broken reed that will pierce us.

4*thly*, Times of inſtability are dangerous and perilous

times. This is ſuppoſed plainly to be the ſin of Iſrael in the text, *Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill;* to be ſtable and ſettled in the faith: but they were unſtable, unſtedfaſt, unſettled. Now, that times of inſtability are dangerous, may appear from theſe particulars.

1. Unſtable times are times of error; and theſe are dangerous. This is plainly inſinuate, Heb. xiii. 9. "Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace." Unſtable perſons are carried about with every error. This is the dangerous circumſtances of England and of Scotland in our day; what errors are ſpreading? Atheiſm is in a manner profeſſed by a number that call themſelves free-thinkers, who cannot think of a God, though it muſt be as certain that there is an eternal Being, as it is certain there is any being at all; for, there could be no ſuch effects, if there were not a ſupreme cauſe.—Deiſm is openly profeſſed by ſome, who deny all divine and ſupernatural revelation, and applaud the light of nature, tho' under a diſmal eclipſe.—Arianiſm has taken root, a denying the true and proper divinity and ſupreme Deity of Chriſt.—Legaliſm and Libertiniſm which may be well joined together, becauſe they that deny Chriſt to be the end of the law for righteouſneſs, being not under grace, but under the law, ſin muſt have dominion over them.—Profaneneſs and immoralities, and all manner of errors and evils take place in unſtable times.

2. Unſtable times are times of temptations from men and devils; and it is much to continue with Chriſt in ſuch times: when men are tempted with the world, and tempted by the devil and his temptations, it is much to get that teſtimony, Luke xxii. 28. "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptation, and I appoint unto you a kingdom." A time of general temptation is a dark and dangerous hour, Rev. iii. 10. "Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." When temptation is ſo univerſal, no wonder the moſt part are carried down with the ſtream.

3. Unſtable

3. Unſtable times are backſliding times; times of defection and apoſtacy, and theſe are perilous times; for, "The backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own ways;" and, "If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him." Surely theſe are perilous times in Scotland, when they are ſuch covenant-breaking times; wherein reformation-principles and purity are given up, wherein truth falleth, and he that departeth from evil, and adhereth to covenanted truth, maketh himſelf a prey, Iſa. lix. 15.

4. Unſtable times are times of diviſion, and theſe are perilous times; for, "A city, or houſe, divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand." Then is deſolation near, when the anger of the Lord has divided a people; divided their hearts, ſo as they hate one-another; and divided their tongues, ſo as they reproach one-another, and ſpeak evil of one-another; then is the land's name juſtly turned to a *Babel*, Gen. xi. 9. "The name of it is called *Babel*, becauſe the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the Lord ſcatter them abroad upon the face of the earth." When people's hearts and tongues are divided and confounded, then they are in hazard of being ſcattered and deſtroyed.

5. Unſtable times are times of the ſlighting of the goſpel, the heavenly manna. When people cannot reſt content with that proviſion which God makes for them in the goſpel, how dangerous is this! See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, 15, 16. "They mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, till there was no remedy. Jer. xxvi. 4, 5, 6. Thus ſaith the Lord, If you will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have ſet before you, to hearken to the words of my ſervants the prophets, whom I ſent unto you, both riſing up early, and ſending them (but ye have not hearkened) then will I make this houſe like Shiloh, and will make this city a curſe to all the nations of the earth." Was ever a nation more guilty than ourſelves? Judge then if we live not in perilous times.

6. Unſtable times are times of formality in religion; men having a form of godlineſs, without the power; yea,

denying the power of it. When God has but the outside; drawing near to him with the mouth, and honouring him with the lips: a formal carnal way of worshipping God, instead of worshipping him in the Spirit. Unstable souls, that take up a profession of religion, which degenerates into a formal outside hypocritical devotion, are in a very dangerous case, as appears from the many woes Christ denounced against the Pharisees and hypocrites.

7. Unstable times are times of security. Where there is no spiritual settlement there will be a carnal settlement, like Moab, that was at ease from his youth, and settled upon his lees and dregs, not being emptied from vessel to vessel, Jer. xlviii. 11. It is a dangerous time, when the wise and foolish virgins are sleeping and slumbering; when men cry, Peace, peace; and like the old world, put the evil day far off from them, sudden destruction may be at the door.

8. Unstable times are times of careless indifferency about the matters of God, and lukewarmness. When people are unstable in the truth, they can never be zealous for it: the dangerousness of this disease you read of, Rev. iii. 16. "Because thou art lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth;" that is, reject thee with abhorrence. This, among others, is the sin of our day, and shows we are living in perilous times. There are two things very sad in Scotland.

(1.) Our light has worn out our zeal. It is seldom heard tell of, that light should be an enemy to zeal and practice, till now it seems to be our misery, that our light, knowledge, wisdom, and politeness has blunted our zeal for God and for reformation-principles and practice.

(2.) Our hazards have drowned our zeal; our apprehended hazards and difficulties have quenched the fire of zeal in many. The days have been in Scotland, when our difficulties and crosses, hazards and dangers, have been as a burning coal to quicken our zeal for God, and make it the more fervent; but now, our difficulties and dangers are like so much wet timber laid upon the top of our zeal, like to drown it all out; and yet, where

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is the danger of ſtanding up for God and his cauſe? "Where is the fury of the oppreſſor?" Is it our ſtrength and ſafety to run away from God and duty? No, by no means: rather, is it not our ſtrength to ſit ſtill?

II. We now proceed to the ſecond thing propoſed, which was, To open up the *nature* of this ſtability in the faith, or ſteadineſs and eſtabliſhment therein. I would here, 1. Offer a ſcripture or two for ſhewing how this duty is commanded and commended. 2. What it ſuppoſes. 3. What it includes. 4. What it excludes. 5. What it infers.

1*ſt*, I would ſhow that it is both commanded and commended. I might cite many ſcriptures for this end; but I ſhall only quote one ſcripture, where it is commanded, and another where it is commended.

1. This ſtability in the faith is commanded, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. "Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith, quit you like men, be ſtrong. Stand faſt in the faith;" this is that duty which the apoſtle calls a continuing in the faith, grounded and ſettled, and not being moved away from the hope of the goſpel, Col. i. 23. This is that which he calls a being ſtedfaſt and immoveable, yea, always abounding in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58. This is that which is called an earneſt contending for the faith, once delivered to the ſaints, Jude 3. And again, it is called a ſtanding faſt in one mind and ſpirit, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel, in nothing terrified by your adverſaries, &c. Phil. i. 27. In a word, it is called a being faithful to the death; "Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Rev. ii. 10. In all which ſcriptures this duty of ſtability is commanded; and it is called a ſtanding faſt in the faith, to ſhow the influence that faith has upon perſeverance: for "By faith we ſtand," by faith we walk, by faith we live, by faith we fight, by faith we overcome; and all this, becauſe by faith we ſtand ſtill, and reſt upon a God in Chriſt, eſtabliſhed in the faith.—Thus it is commanded. Again,

2. This ſtability in the faith is commended, Rev. ii. 13. there the church of Pergamus is commended in theſe words, "Thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied

my faith," &c. Where the thing they are commended for being ſtable in, is Chriſt's name, and his faith; that is, his goſpel, and the doctrine thereof. Paul is called a choſen veſſel to bear his name among the Gentiles; that is, his goſpel, and it may well be ſo called, becauſe, by the goſpel he makes his name known: and it is called the faith, becauſe it is the object of faith, the thing to be believed; and it is called his faith, becauſe he is the author of it; the ſum and ſubſtance of it. The giver of this goſpel doctrine ſubſtitutes himſelf in Adam's room, and fulfils the law, which to him was a covenant of works: and hence it is, that out of his obeying the law, the ſweet doctrine of the goſpel flows unto us; "He is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth." Now, this is what the church of Pergamus held, and would not deny, but gave their teſtimony to it againſt all the enemies that oppoſed it; no wonder, for it is the words of eternal life. We are not to think the worſe of any truth, that it is oppoſed and controverted, and requires faſt holding, and violent holding; "The kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Nay, the more a truth is controverted, the more commendable is a ſteady adherence to it. While we are in this militant ſtate, we cannot hold the truth without fighting; it is ſaid of the builders of the walls of Jeruſalem, Neh. iv. 18. "That every builder had his ſword girded by his ſide, and ſo builded:" ſo, in adhering to the truth of the goſpel, we are not to think ſtrange to hear of a banner in the banquetting-houſe of the goſpel; "He brought me to the banquetting-houſe, and his banner over me was love." Why a banner in a banquetting-houſe? Becauſe we cannot keep the feaſt without oppoſition either from without or within. Many, when they ſee their believing promiſed to be joined with a combat, they are diſcouraged; but ſpiritual builders muſt be ſpiritual ſoldiers, holding the promiſe in one hand and the weapon in the other; the word in one hand, and the ſword in the other; the truth in one hand, and the armour of proof in the other. Faith without trouble or fighting is a ſuſpicious faith; for true faith is a fighting, wreſtling faith; and this is the faith that is here commended

mended, as it is alſo, Rev. iii. 10. "Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I will alſo keep thee in the hour of temptation. Thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith," Rev. ii. 13.

As to the denying of faith, there are four degrees of it. (1.) When men are ſilent thro' fear, unable to ſay, with Paul, "I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt." (2.) When men diſſemble as Peter, "I know not what thou ſayeſt." (3.) When they halt between two opinions, like theſe in the days of Ahab, that halted between God and Baal. (4.) When they expreſly deny the faith, as Peter denied Chriſt, "I know not the man;" and am not upon that ſide of the houſe, nor of that party. Thus, Chriſt is many times wounded in the houſe of his friends; ſometimes by a traiterous Judas, ſometimes by a timorous Peter. However, the denial of the faith goes on by ſuch degrees as theſe; every one of them draws on another: ſilence, through fear, draws on diſſimulation; diſſimulation draws on a halting between two, as it were, in a demurring what to do; and this halting draws on denying of the faith expreſly; for, apoſtacy is a ſlippery precipiece; therefore men ſhould beware of the leaſt beginning, and of the leaſt ſhifting of the profeſſion of the faith, when called thereunto.

2*dly*, What this ſtability in the faith ſuppoſes? Surely it ſuppoſes peoples being once in the faith; as Paul deſigns Timothy, his ſon in the faith, 1 Tim. i. 2.; for, till once people be in the faith, they can never be eſtabliſhed in the faith, as the word is, Col. ii. 7. No more than a tree can be firmly rooted in the earth, that was never truly planted into it. Stability in the faith then, ſuppoſes a being in the faith; and that as it reſpects either the word of faith, the grace of faith, the obedience of faith, or the profeſſion of faith.

True ſtability in the faith ſuppoſes, 1. That we know the word of faith. 1. That we have the grace of faith. 3. That we make a profeſſion of faith. 4. That we yield the obedience of faith.

1. That we know the word of faith, or the doctrine of faith, or truth; for a man can never be ſtable in the faith which he is ignorant of. If ever we will be eſta-

bliſhed in ſcriptural principles, we muſt be acquainted with the ſcriptures, the word of God, and know the truth as it is in Jeſus; and that not only a head-knowledge, but a heart-knowledge, that it may be a heart-eſtabliſhment in the faith: this is called a receiving the faith in love, or a receiving the love of the truth, 2 Theſ. ii. 19. Knowledge and affection ſhould grow together; for theſe people are moſt prone to error, who gain knowledge of truth, without affection to it; "Becauſe they received not the love of the truth that they might be ſaved. For this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lye; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs."

2. It ſuppoſes that we have the grace of faith; for, ſtability in the faith, being an eſtabliſhment in the grace of faith, as well as in the word or doctrine of faith, it muſt preſuppoſe, that a man has the grace of faith, otherwiſe he cannot ſit ſtill, or be ſtable in it; no more than one can be ſaid to ſit ſtill who has never ſat down: true ſtability then ſuppoſes, that a man hath once been made to ſit down and reſt upon Chriſt as his righteouſneſs and ſtrength. We are called, 1 Pet. v. 9. to reſiſt the devil, ſtedfaſt in the faith; and that not only by a ſtedfaſt adherence to that word of faith, which was the weapon Chriſt made uſe of againſt the devil, when he quoted ſcripture to him, he refuted him by ſcripture; and this ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is the weapon by which we are to reſiſt every temptation to ſin: but alſo, by a ſtedfaſt acting and exerciſing of the grace of faith, I mean, true juſtifying faith; becauſe this weapon of the word of faith cannot be uſed but by the grace of faith: for, to make uſe of the word of faith, without the grace of faith, is to do no more than the devil and his inſtruments can do, who will quote ſcripture as well as we; but to wield that weapon with the arm of faith, is what none but true believers, through grace can do.

3. It ſuppoſes that we make profeſſion of the faith; why ſo? Becauſe ſtability in the faith, is a holding faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, Heb. x. 23. *They* cannot be ſaid to hold faſt the profeſſion thereof,

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who never had a profeſſion, and never made a profeſſion. Men may be profeſſors, indeed, that are not true believers; but all true believers muſt be profeſſors, and ought to be profeſſors, and hold faſt their profeſſion, in the worſt times, without being aſhamed of Chriſt, or his cauſe; as Paul, who was not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, though oppoſed by the great, and wiſe, and learned of his day. Again,

4. It ſuppoſes that we yield the obedience of faith; of which we read, Rom. xvi. 26. This is a practical profeſſion, or confeſſion of Chriſt. There may be a verbal profeſſion with the mouth, without a practical profeſſion with the life; both ſhould go together: we ought to confeſs Chriſt with the mouth, Rom. x. 10. without being aſhamed to acknowledge our Maſter; and we ought to diſcover the ſincerity of our profeſſion by the whole tract of our converſation. This obedience of faith, or practical profeſſion, is either active or paſſive: active profeſſion is when our lives and manners do ſpeak and confeſs Chriſt, and evidence that we are not of theſe that profeſs to know him, but in works deny him:— A paſſive profeſſion is, when we are ready to ſeal with our ſufferings and blood, what we profeſs with our mouths and actions: this is the profeſſion of martyrs, "To whom it is given, in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake," Phil. i. 29. And here you ſee what is the obedience of faith, both active and paſſive. Now, true ſtability herein, ſuppoſes a man's entering upon this obedience; for, how ſhall he be ſtable in it, who never began to yield it? Stability in the faith then, being a ſtability in the doctrine of faith, in the grace of faith, in the profeſſion of faith, and in the obedience of faith; it ſuppoſes a man's knowing and underſtanding the faith, which we ought to be eſtabliſhed in; believing what he underſtands; profeſſing what he believes; and practiſing what he profeſſes: and, indeed, faith not held in practice, will ſoon be denied in profeſſion, when the trial comes.

3*dly*, The next particular propoſed here was, What this ſtability in the faith includes. It includes two things, 1. An adherence to the faith. 2. A perſeverance in it.

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1. A ſtedfaſt adherence to the faith, to the word of faith, the grace of faith, the profeſſion of faith, and the obedience of faith; this adherence to, or ſitting ſtill upon the ſure foundation, is called a being rooted and built up in Chriſt, Col. ii. 6, 7. It is not enough that we receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, but we muſt walk in him, and be rooted and built up in him, by a daily improving of him. It is a fixed adherence to him notwithſtanding all fears, Pſalm cxii. 7. "He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord; his heart is eſtabliſhed, he ſhall not be afraid, &c." Notwithſtanding all attacks of the enemy, and defeats by them. Though a believer be beat down, yet by faith he riſes, and keeps his ground; "Rejoice not againſt me, O mine enemy; for, though I fall, I ſhall riſe," Micah vii. 8. He that kills his enemy at the firſt blow, ſhows himſelf valiant; but ſo does he alſo ſhew a great deal of valour, who being often knocked down and wounded, yet riſes again and ſtands to it. Tho' the field be many times doubtful between faith and fear, between faith and doubting, yet faith overcomes by adhering to Chriſt, notwithſtanding difficulties in the way: thus Abraham ſtaggered not, but was fixed in his perſuaſion of the promiſe, being nothing moved by contrary appearances, but againſt hope believed in hope; overlooking both the deadneſs of his own body, and the deadneſs of Sarah's womb.

2. It includes conſtant perſeverance in the faith; for, "He that endures to the end ſhall be ſaved." They that caſt away their confidence entirely, were never built upon Chriſt; and that ſay, "Why ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?" This is not to ſit ſtill, but to weary and withdraw from Chriſt. A true believer may be weary of his ſins, and weary of his life, but he will never be weary of his faith; he takes up Job's reſolution, "Tho' he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him." He buys the truth, and will never ſell it; he buys it at at any rate, and will ſell it at no rate: but they that buy truth at an eaſy rate, no wonder that they ſell it at an eaſy rate; he that buys it for the ſake of the world, will ſell it for the ſake of the world; he that buys it for a luſt, will ſell it for a luſt.

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There are two things we are to adhere to, and perſevere in, which yet the moſt part of people think needleſs; and theſe are, 1. The preſent truth; and, 2. The leaſt truth.

(1.) The preſent truth is what we are always to adhere to, and perſevere in, 2 Pet. i. 12. There the apoſtle ſpeaks of being eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth. If a man do not adhere to the truth, that is at preſent in controverſy in his day, he will adhere to no truth at all. The beſt evidence of integrity is freedom from the preſent corruptions of the times and place we live in; and adherence to the preſent oppoſed truth, ſo as to ſwim againſt the ſtream when it is ſtrong. Some think, what need we trouble our heads with a truth that is controverted among great and learned men? Really, Sirs, there is hardly one fundamental truth in religion, but what has been controverted by the devil and his inſtruments; and if we will not cleave to oppoſed and controverted truth, we muſt renounce the truth altogether. Nay, the more that Chriſt and his truths are oppoſed, the more ſhould we ſtand firm for him and it.

(2.) The leaſt truth is what we are to adhere to, and perſevere in, if we would be ſtable in the faith; he that is content to part with a hoove, is content to part with the whole of religion: as the true obeyer has a reſpect to all God's commandments; ſo the true believer has a reſpect to all his truths. The leaſt truth of God is a beam from the infinite Truth; and the man that will not adhere to the leaſt truth of Chriſt, will adhere to no truth in the day of trial for the truth.

4*thly*, The fourth thing here propoſed was, What this ſtability in the faith excludes? To this we reply, That among other things, it excludes theſe eight particulars following.

1. It excludes a fainting at the ſight of the croſs, Prov. ii. 10. "If thou faint in the day of adverſity, thy ſtrength is ſmall." Sometimes the diſtant view of the croſs is more terrible than when it is at hand; and ſome have fainted at the diſtant view of it, that have rejoiced at the preſence of it. Peter was not ſo near the croſs, when only his Maſter was tried before the council, but

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he had a diſtant proſpect of it, and he fainted and fell by a ſilly maid challenging him; but when he came to be before the council himſelf, inſtead of fainting, you ſee what boldneſs he had, Acts v. 29. how he and the reſt of the apoſtles departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Chriſt. The nearer the croſs of Chriſt is viewed, the ſweeter it is; and the nearer we come to it, the lighter. However, this fainting at the ſight of the croſs is excluded by this ſtability: the more ſtable, the leſs fainting.

2. This ſtability in the faith excludes a doubtfulneſs and heſitation about the truth, that we ſtand up for, and adhere to, in a time of trial, Rom. xv. 5. "Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind." A man will never firmly adhere to, or ſuffer for that, which he is not fully perſuaded is a truth. I deſy you to be a cleanly ſufferer for the cauſe of Chriſt, in a day of Scotland's defection, unleſs you can ſay, that you are really perſuaded, that the covenanted Reformation, doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline and government of the church of Scotland, is the work of God, and founded on the word of God, and you have no doubt in your heart to the contrary.

3. This ſtability in the faith excludes a preſumptuous perſuaſion. We read of ſome preſumptuous believers, John ii. 23. to whom Chriſt would not commit himſelf, becauſe he knew them to be but rotten at the heart. Many have a faith that has neither God for its Father, nor the ſcriptures for its mother; it is a baſtard, that has neither true father nor mother. Chriſt will not commit himſelf to ſuch believers: they perſuade themſelves that they truſt in Chriſt, but he knows them, that they cannot be truſted, and that they will not be truſty to him, or his cauſe.

4. This ſtability in the faith excludes wavering, and being toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, Eph. iv. 14. Some will have one religion this year, and another the next; one religion with this company, and another with that company. It is true, the faith of believers may be ſhaken by temptations from the devil, and his inſtruments, but yet it is not broken

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nor baniſhed: he maintains an high veneration for the truth which he hears brangled, oppoſed, and borne down, and yet cannot ſufficiently defend, like the woman that ſaid, "Though I cannot diſpute for Chriſt, yet "I can burn for him." But if your religion changes with the wind of temptation, or turns with the tide of the times, it is not worth a farthing.

5. This ſtability in the faith excludes doubleneſs of mind and tongue, James i. 8. "A double-minded man is unſtable in all his ways." Many have a double mind, a double face, a double tongue; and when this doubleneſs gets in among God's people, it marrs this ſtability. Peter learned a little of this doubleneſs and diſſimulation, for which Paul took him to taſk, Gal. ii. 13. Some are expert in this trade of diſſembling, that they may pleaſe every party; but their prudence will be their plague, who are not ſtraight and upright for God, to the utmoſt of their power and knowledge: their policy will never be a cloak for their perjury, who, upon prudential conſiderations, deſert the cauſe of Chriſt.

6. This ſtability in the faith excludes all ſinful compliances with the courſes of the times. To go further than conſcience will allow, is to make ſhipwreck of faith, and a good conſcience, 1 Tim. i. 19. Carnal reaſon ſays, Hold with the times, comply with the meaſures of the majority, be what it will; it is dangerous to do otherwiſe: but God ſays, Hold faith and a good conſcience, and then you are ſafe; "He that walks uprightly, walks ſafely."

7. This ſtability in the faith excludes ſinful ſilence, when the cauſe and intereſt of Chriſt requires our teſtimony; *For Zion's ſake will I not hold my peace*, ſays the prophet, Iſa. lxii. 1. The watchmen upon her walls are ordered not to hold their peace, but to cry aloud, and not ſpare. There are ſome ſcriptures that many are like to break their necks upon in our days, and that is one among the reſt, Amos v. 13. "The prudent ſhall keep ſilence in that time, for it is an evil time." Why then, ſay ſome, in their practice, we ſhould not ſpeak a word for truth, let truth be never ſo much oppoſed; nor ſpeak a word againſt any acts of Aſſembly, let them be never ſo con-

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trary to ſcripture and covenants both. But God never warranted any, according to their call, capacity, and ſtation, ſo to keep ſilence as not to ſpeak againſt the evils and errors of the times: this were inconſiſtent to his ſolemn orders to his watchmen, to give faithful warning to people, as they would not be guilty of their blood. And if God has ſaid, he will ſend a ſword to avenge the quarrel of his covenant, I think, we particularly, who preach the goſpel unto you, would not be faithful, if we did not warn you that Scotland is in danger of God's wrath, as long as there is any ſtanding acts of the national church, contradictory to, and inconſiſtent with the National Covenant; nor will ever any wreſted ſcripture be a ſufficient cloak to cover us from the guilt of ſinful ſilence.

8. This ſtability in the faith excludes all ſinful debates and diſputings about known truths. We read, 1 Tim. iii. 5. of perverſe diſputings of men of corrupt minds, deſtitute of the truth: men that will bring known truths to be matter of debate, will never be ſtable; if the truth come not to be a matter beyond debate, and beyond diſpute with them. Alas! all the precious truths of God, even ſome that were never debated in our land, are, now-a-days, become debatable points. It was never a point of debate, or debated in our reforming times, that miniſters were to be ſettled by the call and conſent of the people, but now it is turned to a debatable point; though we have the ſtrongeſt arguments in ſcripture for it. In Acts i. 23. we have an argument for it drawn from the greater to the leſs, in the whole church, or peoples being called to chuſe the apoſtle, as far as was conſiſtent with his being immediately choſen of God, as the office required; for, the people were to chuſe the two, out of which God was to chuſe one: and if they had ſuch an hand in the choice of the extraordinary officer, much more ought they to have in the ordinary.—In Acts vi. 3. we have an argument from the leſs to the greater, in the chooſing of deacons; as the higheſt officers, the apoſtles, were not choſen of God, without the people, in the former example; ſo here the loweſt officer could not be *choſen* by the apoſtles themſelves, but by the people; though one might think the apoſtles were as good judges;

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and if the people muſt chuſe theſe that take care of their alms or charity, much more concern have they in chooſing ſuch as take care of their ſouls.—In Acts xiv. 23. we have a plain argument from the example, the apoſtles ordained *preſbyters* by the *ſuffrage of the people*, as it is well known the word Χειροτονήσαντες, ſignifies *.—And James ii. from the beginning, we have theſe arguments confirmed by the apoſtle, diſcharging all reſpect, in ſpiritual matters, to the rich man with the gold ring and the gay clothing; intimating, that no temporal wealth or heritage can intitle them to any ſpiritual privilege, no more than an earthly eſtate can intitle a man to heaven; and conſequently, no heritor of this earth, as ſuch, has any right above others to chuſe paſtors to any congregation, which is a ſpiritual privilege relating to immortal ſouls; miniſters themſelves have no title to be lords over the conſciences of men, far leſs have they power, by any act whatſoever, to make temporal heritors, or earthly ſuperiors, lords over God's heritage. But for as clear as this is in ſcripture, and though it be one of the covenanted principles, yet it is turned now to a debatable point†.

Again, it is now turned a debatable queſtion, whether Chriſt be the ſupreme God, the moſt high God, tho' yet in ſcripture all the great names of God, all the glorious attributes of God, all the wonderful works of God, and all the worſhip due only to God be aſcribed to him ‡. It is now a debatable point, whether there be any neceſſity for divine ſupernatural revelation; whether the light of nature be not ſufficient, without the ſcripture,

* The word Χειροτονήσαντες, in our verſion, is but half-tranſlated; and made to run thus; "And when they had ORDAINED them elders in every church." But according to Eraſmus, who renders it CUM SUFFRAGIIS CREASSENT, and Beza, Paſor, &c. who have it, PER SUFFRAGIA CREASSENT, it ſhould run thus, "When they had, by SUFFRAGES, appointed to them elders in every church." All the old Engliſh Tranſlations have it ſo; and it was retained by our laſt tranſlators, until the verſion was committed by K. James, to ſome of the Engliſh biſhops to be reviſed, who vitiate this, as well as thirteen other paſſages of the New Teſtament, to make them favour the Church of England. The word here is not Χειροθεσία, which ſignifies the action of miniſters in ordaining; but it is Χειροτονία, which is expreſſive of the peoples act in electing paſtors, by elevation, or lifting up the hand, as was the cuſtom at that time. In this ſenſe the apoſtle uſes it, 2 Cor. viii. 19.

† This reaſoning has a peculiar reſpect to the Act of Parliament, 1710, reſtoring Patronage, and the Act of Aſſembly, 1732, in veſting heritors and elders with the power of election of miniſters. See above, p. 298. 310. 351.

‡ Alluding to the Proceſs concerning Profeſſor Simpſon, briefly laid open, *Vol. II. p. 466. Vol.* IV. p. 144.

to ſalvation *.—In a word, the greateſt points in religion are turned debatable points, and among the reſt, whether our national covenants be binding upon us †.

Well, I ſay, ſtability in the faith excludes all ſinful debating about known truths; and when matters of faith are turned to debatable queſtions, it is a clear demonſtration of the inſtability of the times. If we would fit ſtill, and be ſtable Chriſtians, we are to lay up known truths in our boſoms, as matters beyond debate; the debating of known truths is a ſin as pernicious as committing of known ſins, and omitting of known duty, or neglecting of known commands.—Thus we ſee what this ſtability in the faith includes. The mentioning of theſe things plainly ſhow, that it is our ſtrength to fit ſtill, and to be ſtable and fixed in the faith: there is little ſafety where there is little ſtability.

5*thly*, The next thing propoſed upon this head was, What this ſtability in the faith infers. And I ſhall conſider this queſtion, 1. With reſpect to the object. 2. With reference to the exerciſe of this ſtability in the faith. The firſt queſtion will relate to what we are to be ſtable in, when ſtable in the faith? And the ſecond to this, How we ſhould be eſtabliſhed?

[1.] What this ſtability infers, with reference to the object? And here we ſhall enumerate the following ten particulars on this point.

1. Stability in the faith infers, with reference to the object, wherein we are to be ſtable, and ſtability in reſpect of our principles: and hence we are called to hold faith

* About this time the principles of infidelity were greatly upon the increaſe; and ſeveral of the younger clergy but too juſtly ſuſpected as favourers of Deiſtical tenets. Mr. Campbell, profeſſor of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory in St. Andrews, openly publiſhed to the world a ſyſtem of very pernicious principles; and amongſt others, "That the laws of nature are, in themſelves, a certain and "ſufficient rule to direct rational minds to happineſs; and that the obſerving "theſe laws is the great mean and inſtrument of our real and laſting felicity." And the author of "The Aſſembly's Catechiſm Reviſed, &c." ſaps all the peculiar doctrines of Chriſtianity, and ſtrikes at the whole ſcheme of divine revelation, contained in the ſaid Catechiſm. And ſo inſolent were ſome upon this point, that a little after this, one Mr. Nimmo, ſtudent in divinity, in a public diſcourſe in the divinity-hall of Edinburgh, made a blaſphemous attack upon the whole of divine revelation.

† The perpetual binding obligation of theſe covenants have been aſſerted by many writers; particularly by Mr Shields, in his Hind let Looſe, p. 514,—520. and Mr. Brown in his Apologetical Relation, p. 327,—414.

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and a good conſcience, 1 Tim. i. 19. theſe two make up a right principle, namely, faith and a good conſcience. The object of a right principle is the truth, which is the object of faith. The ſubject of a right principle is conſcience, and that a good conſcience, a ſanctified conſcience; theſe two muſt be joined together, "Hold faith and a good conſcience." Error is ſeldom accompanied with holineſs; faith and conſcience go well together; many join them very profanely, by ſwearing by them; few join them religiouſly, and hold them faſt together. The Spirit ſpeaks expreſly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, 1 Tim. iv. 1. We do not know what is coming upon us; but it may be that theſe truths we now allow, and approve of, we may come to be aſhamed of, as ſome are at this day of our ancient covenanted principles.

2. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in reſpect of the promiſes. We ſee David taking hold of the promiſe, Pſal. lx. 6. *God has ſpoken in his holineſs, I will rejoice:* he ſees the mercy, truth, and holineſs of God are pledged for making out the promiſe. Now, we ought to be ſtable in the faith thereof: many times we take the promiſe, and upon the firſt temptation we caſt it away; but we are to hold the promiſe as we would do our life, ſaying, "Lord, I hope in thy word; Lord, remember the word on which thou haſt cauſed me to hope." We are to expect good upon the head of the promiſe.

3. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in reſpect of the relations wherein we ſtand to God, and he to us: the church maintains the faith of this, Song ii. 6. "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." And again, Song vii. 10. "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." She ſays it backward and forward, He is mine, and I am his; and again, I am his, and he is mine: and, indeed, ſtability in the faith of this, is requiſite when enemies ſay, "Where is thy God?" And what claim have you to him more than others.

4. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in duty, and particularly in the duty of the times, and in preſent duty, that God calls to in his preſent diſpenſations: as it is ſaid of the children of Iſſachar, that they had un-

derſtanding of the times to know what Iſrael ought to do, 1 Chron. xii. 32. It may be ſaid of many of us, what Chriſt ſaid of the Phariſees, Mat. xvi. 3. that they could diſcern the face of the ſky, but could not diſcern the ſigns of the times. We have ſkill of many things, but no ſkill of preſent duty: but he that is eſtabliſhed in the knowledge of preſent duty, though there ſhould be never ſo many dangers and hazards in the way, he will venture upon duty, and tread upon the neck of hazard. See John xi. 7, 8. "Jeſus ſaid unto the diſciples, Let us go into Judea. Again, His diſciples anſwered, Maſter, the Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee, and goeſt thou thither again? Jeſus anſwered, Are there not twelve hours in the day, and while a man walks in the day he ſtumbles not, becauſe he ſeeth the light." 'I have, might he ſay, twelve 'hours to walk in, and they are not yet ended; there 'is no fear of hazard till my day be done:' let not preſent duty be neglected, from the proſpect of hazard. Danger hath many times more bulk in our eye than duty; but, if we follow Chriſt, duty will be more bulky in our eye than danger.

5. Stability in the faith infers ſtability in our reſolution to follow duty. Thus Joſhua, chap. xxiv. 14, 15. when he is dealing with Iſrael, to whom he had been a leader, and endeavouring to confirm them in their reſolution to ſerve the Lord, "Chuſe ye, ſays he, whether you will ſerve the gods on this ſide of the flood, or the gods on the other ſide of the flood; but as for me, and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord." 'Lay your hand to your heart, 'might he ſay, and chooſe you whom you will ſerve; 'but I am reſolute, I will ſerve the Lord!' Such a ſtability David profeſſes, "I have ſworn, and I will perform, that I will keep thy righteous judgments."

6. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in our courage and boldneſs to confeſs Chriſt before the world, when others deny him: it is an awful word, Mat. x. 32, 33. "Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs before my Father which is in heaven; but whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him alſo will I deny before my Father who is in heaven." It is recorded to the praiſe of Daniel, that when he was forbidden to pray to God, he

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is not daunted, but will openly worſhip him with his windows open toward Jeruſalem, when a royal ſtatute and decree was emitted, that whoſoever ſhould aſk a petition of any god or man, for thirty days, ſave of king Darius, he ſhould be caſt into the lions den; Daniel worſhipped God in all the ſolemn circumſtances he had formerly done. Some might have thought he might have worſhipped and kept his window cloſe, without expoſing himſelf by ſuch a circumſtance; but when even the circumſtances of a teſtimony and confeſſion tends to glorify God, and the failing even in circumſtances would tend to diſhonour God, and gratify the enemy, they muſt be adhered unto. Hence ſay ſome, "He that cannot be "a circumſtantial confeſſor, will never be a martyr."

7. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in our war againſt ſin, and in our old and new victories we have obtained over our idols and luſts, that we loſe not that which we have wrought, 2 John 8. "Look to yourſelves, that we loſe not that which we have *gained*," as the word is in the margin. May we not ſay many times, What we gained in the forenoon, we loſe in the afternoon; what victory over ſin we have gained in the evening, we have loſt in the morning; or, what we have gained in the morning, we loſe in the evening. Perhaps you have got ſome ground upon your worldly-mindedneſs, ſome time ago; ſome ground upon your paſſion, ſome ground upon your luſts; but, alas! now, all is gone. What need have we to look to ourſelves that we be ſtable in our war againſt corruption, ſtedfaſt in maintaining what victories we have got over our luſts!

8. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in our ſpiritual frame, as far as poſſible. It is true, this is the moſt changeable thing in the world; who can ſpeak of a communion-frame continuing eight days? yea, or eight hours? It is a very rare thing; yet this ought to be ſtudied, and means of maintaning a ſpiritual frame followed, particularly in the intervals of duty; not only by ſpiritual converſation, but alſo ſpiritual ejaculations towards heaven; *Pray without ceaſing*, ſays the apoſtle:

that is, according to ſome, endeavour ſtill to maintain a praying frame.

9. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in ſpiritual experience and experimental knowledge. This helps to courage, in unſtable and dangerous times. Paul, ſpeaking of his ſufferings, ſays, "Nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed; for I know in whom I have believed: and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him," 2 Tim. i. 12. 'I know what dealings 'I have had with him, and what affairs I have commit-'ted to his truſt; I know what meetings I have had with 'him, may a believer ſay, what Bethel-viſits I have had 'from him, and what Peniel-views I have had of him.' Trying times may ſhake your experiences, and death will try them, and perhaps bring down twenty of them to one or two: we need to be ſtable and well eſtabliſhed therein.

10. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in all the other graces of the Spirit. It infers ſtability in our love and affection to Chriſt, and his truth. The church of Epheſus is reproved becauſe ſhe fell from her firſt love, Rev. ii. 4. O! where is that love that once you had to Chriſt and his way? But were we ſtedfaſt in the faith, we would be ſtedfaſt in our affections to Chriſt and his cauſe.—It infers ſtability in our joy, ſo as to rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus; "Tho' the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, yet will I rejoice in the Lord: I will be glad in the God of my ſalvation." It infers ſtability in our hope; "Continuing in the faith, grounded and ſettled, ſo as not to be moved away from the hope of the goſpel," Col. i. 23. What the anchor is to the ſhip, that is hope to the ſoul, "Entering within the vail, and having reſpect to the recompence of reward," with Moſes; living in expectation of the heavenly Canaan; and in this view preferring a ſhare with the ſuffering Iſraelites before all the riches of Egypt.—It infers ſtability in our zeal; many are like Gallio, who care for none of theſe things, whether God or Baal prevail; whether Dagon or the ark be ſet up: whatever religion is in vogue they ſet up for, being like Reuben, *Unſtable as water, and cannot excel;* but ſtability in our zeal for God, and his intereſt, is duty at all

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times, eſpecially in times of greateſt hazard, though it ſhould coſt us the loſs of our lives as well as our livelihood: it will be gain at laſt.—Thus much of the object of our ſtability, or what we are to be eſtabliſhed in.

[2.] What this ſtability infers, with reference to the exerciſe of this ſtability, or the duty of ſtedfaſtneſs.

1. This duty of ſtability infers and carries along with it grace in the heart, as the predominant ſettler and eſtabliſher of the ſoul, Heb. xiii. 9. "It is a good thing to have the heart eſtabliſhed with grace." Grace muſt be predominant in that exerciſe, in ſettling the heart in the day of trouble and temptation. Where there is little grace, there is much ebbing and flowing in religion.

2. This duty of ſtability infers an immoveable motion, a conſtant moving, yet always immoveable, 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Be ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord:" the word ſignifies ever moving, and yet never moving; that is, ever moving within the circle of duty that God has caſt for him, but never moving over God's bounds.

3. This duty of ſtability infers, a continual watchfulneſs; "Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith. Let him that thinks he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall." We ought to watch unto prayer; and watch unto the practice of known truth; every freſh diſcovery of truth quickening to the freſh practice of it: we ought to watch againſt ſin, and particularly againſt the ſin of a backſliding time, wherein perjury is varniſhed over with the name of prudence. See Iſa. li. 20, 21.

4. This duty of ſtability infers and carries with it, daily renewed actings of faith upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 4. "To whom coming, as to a living ſtone; ye alſo as living ſtones are built up a ſpiritual houſe." It is a new coming to Chriſt that is there ſpoken of? the ſtable Chriſtian every day faſtens new grips, and takes faſter hold of Chriſt, leſt the former grip and former hold ſhould ſlip.

5. This ſtability infers, a daily ſucking in the ſap of the ſcriptures, in order to ſpiritual growth and ſpiritual ſtrength, 1 Pet. ii. 3. "As new-born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"

The ſteady Chriſtian will be daily gathering a ſtock of ſcriptures, and a treaſure of truths into his boſom, that when the devil ſets his cannon of temptation againſt him, he may be ready to bring out a cannon of ſcripture-quotations out of his boſom, as Chriſt himſelf did, Matth. iv. 3,—11. and thereby defeat the devil, and diſcomfit the ſtrong man.

6. This duty of ſtability infers, a patient waiting for the appointed time of the promiſe being accompliſhed; Hab. ii. 3. "The viſion is for an appointed time; but at the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lye: tho' it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come." The Lord many times reſerves ſome precious word of promiſe to be made out to his friends, when they come to ſome ſad hour of trial and temptation; "Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation," Rev. iii. 10. Until the dark hour come, perhaps he will not ſhow himſelf. God promiſes to deliver Iſrael out of Egypt, Exod. iii. 8.; but, behold the Lord keeps the out-making of the promiſe to a Red-ſea, and there he lets it drop into their cup: "The Egyptians whom you have ſeen to-day, you ſhall ſee them again no more for ever," Exod. xiv. 13. Think not ſtrange, if ſome ſweet promiſe be reſerved to a Red-ſea that is before you: Iſrael had never known the ſweetneſs of the promiſe, if a Red-ſea had not made it out. God has wonderful ways of making out his word thro' fire and water.

7. This duty of ſtability infers, a continual warfare, and fighting the good fight of faith, putting on, and keeping on, the ſpiritual armour, Eph. vi. 11, 12. "And above all, taking the ſhield of faith, whereby we quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." When the devil is like to ſet all the houſe in a flame with his fiery darts, we are as faſt to bring water from the word of God, and throw it upon the fire to quench it. Yea, not only has faith the waters of the ſanctuary to caſt upon the flames, but alſo the blood of the covenant, the blood of Chriſt, to extinguiſh the fire; "We overcome by the blood of the Lamb." Why, the believer can go, where the tempter cannot approach, and that is to the holieſt by the blood

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of Jeſus; or to God, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, to bring ſtrength from on high.

8. This duty of ſtability in the faith infers, a living upon the things unſeen, till we get the things that do appear; "We look not at the things that are ſeen, but at the things that are not ſeen; for the things that are ſeen are temporal, but the things that are not ſeen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 18. How did Moſes bear up, when he choſe affliction with the people of God? Why, he endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible, Heb. xi. 27. Viſible things bulk moſt with us but they are the moſt changeable things; therefore, they are beſt off in trying times, amidſt all outward changes, who look moſt to the things that are not ſeen, and which are eternal and unchangeable.

7. This duty of ſtability infers, eſpecially in perilous times, a taking up the croſs, and yet leaving the weight of it upon Chriſt. The croſs of Chriſt is like the yoke of Chriſt, of which he ſays, "My yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light," Mat. xi. 30. We are not to take it up, in order to bear the weight and burden of it, but only to take it up, and lay the weight of it upon Chriſt himſelf, who ſo orders us, ſaying, "Caſt thy burden on the Lord, and he will ſuſtain thee," Pſal. lv. 22. Our Lord never requires us to lift a burden, but with a deſign we ſhould lay it upon his own ſhoulders, who is the chief burden-bearer. When he calls us to a warfare, it is upon his own charges; therefore, if we have any faith, we need not be afraid of the croſs of Chriſt; it is rather matter of joy; "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," Jam. i. 2. It is matter of gloriation; "God forbid that we ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Gal. vi. 14. We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope," Rom. v. 3.

10. This duty of ſtability in the faith, in perilous times, infers a continuance in the faith in times of trouble; *If ye continue in my word*, ſays Chriſt, *then are ye my diſciples indeed; and ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free*, John viii. 31, 32. Who will be the freeſt man in trying times? Even the ſtricteſt man, who continues moſt firmly in the faith. There is a four-

fold work of faith in this continuing exerciſe of it in a day of trouble.

(1.) It is the work of eſtabliſhed faith to take a new feaſt upon an old experience. The man comes ſometimes to a wilderneſs where there is nothing to be gotten but hunger and want, and then ſits down and ſearches around to find ſomething to ſupport him, and preſently recollects what he has formerly enjoyed, and ſo falls upon a five or ſix-year-old experience, a twenty or thirty-year-old experience, and takes a feaſt upon it, ſaying, 'For all that 'is come and gone, "I will remember the years of the 'right-hand of the Moſt High: I will remember thee 'from the land of Jordan, and from the hill Mizar. I 'will remember the works of the Lord; ſurely I will re-'member thy wonders of old,'" Pſal. xlii. 6. lxxvii. 11. It is the work of faith, in the day of trouble, to take a new meal upon an old promiſe, as Jacob did, Gen. xxxii. 12. "Thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good:" and now, "Remember the word on which thou cauſedſt me to hope."

(2.) It is the work of eſtabliſhed faith, in times of trouble, to ſit down upon the hill of difficulties and ſtraits, and ſing that pleaſant ſong, "Tho' the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, nor fruit be found in the vine, *&c.*; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of my ſalvation. Tho' my houſe be not ſo with God;" tho' my heart be not ſo with God as I could wiſh, "yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things and ſure; and this all my ſalvation, and all my deſire."

(3.) It is the work of eſtabliſhed faith, in a day of trouble and hiding, ſometimes to make uſe of ſome common relations to God as an argument for faith, till it get a more ſpecial relation to feed upon; Pſalm cxix. 73. "Thy hands have made and faſhioned me; give me underſtanding that I may learn thy commandments. Thy hands have made and faſhioned me:" well, may not any reprobate wretch in the world ſay the ſame thing? True; but they cannot make ſuch an argument of it, "Give me underſtanding that I may learn thy commandments."—Pſal. xxii. 9, 10. "Thou art he that took me out of the *womb*;" well, what of that? It follows in the next verſe,

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"Thou art my God from my mother's belly."—Faith can take an argument from a general relation, till it get a more ſpecial relation to plead upon.

(4.) It is the work of faith to draw encouragements from diſcouragements: What more diſcouraging than to be called a dog? Matth. xv. 27. yet the poor woman draws encouragements out of it: "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's table." Hezekiah draws encouragement even from oppreſſion; Iſa. xxxviii. 14. "O Lord, I am oppreſſed, undertake for me." David draws encouragement from the greateſt of his ſins, Pſalm xxv. 2. "For thy name's ſake pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." He draws an argument from his weakneſs, Pſalm vi. 2. "Have mercy upon me, for I am weak." And ſometimes from his poverty and neceſſity, Pſalm xl. 17. "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me." Eſtabliſhed faith will, from guilt, draw an argument for pardon; from pollution, an argument for purification; from ſickneſs, an argument for healing, &c.

(5.) It is the work of eſtabliſhed faith, to diſpute and deny the concluſions of unbelief, Pſalm lxxxvii. 7, 8, 9. The concluſions of unbelief are, "The Lord will caſt off; the Lord will be favourable no more; his mercy is clean gone; his promiſe fails; he has forgotten to be gracious; he has in anger ſhut up his tender mercy:" but faith firſt diſputes theſe concluſions, ſaying, "Will the Lord caſt off for ever? will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone? doth his promiſe fail for ever-more? has he forgotten to be gracious? has he in anger ſhut up his tender mercy?" It calls theſe concluſions into debate, diſputing and queſtioning them, and then denies them in the following verſe: "I ſaid, this is my infirmity; I will remember the years of the right-hand of the Moſt High; I will remember the works of the Lord, and his wonders of old." And whenever faith comes to deny the concluſion of unbelief, then it is at the head of the mount, as it were, at the top of the hill, and a ſong of triumph in its mouth: "I will remember the years of the right-hand of the Moſt High, and his works and wonders of old."

(6.) It is the work of eſtabliſhed faith, in a day of

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the trial of faith, to recover and reſtore the ſoul, when temptation has thrown it down into the mire. David fell before the temptation that was drawn from the proſperity of the wicked, and adverſity of the godly, Pſalm lxx. and ſays, verſe 13. "Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency; for I am plagued all day long." Well, but whenever he went to the ſanctuary of God by faith, then he recovers himſelf, and ſays, "So fooliſh was I and ignorant; I was as a beaſt before thee: nevertheleſs, I am continually with thee: thou holdeſt me by my right-hand; thou wilt guide me by thy counſel, and afterwards receive me into thy glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in the earth that I deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever."—Thus we ſee what this ſtability in the faith infers and carries along with it. I now proceed to the next general head,

III. To ſhew that this ſtability and eſtabliſhment in the faith, is peoples ſtrength and ſafety in perilous times. For opening this head, I ſhall conſider, 1. The evil and diſadvantage of Inſtability. 2. The good and advantage of Stability in the faith.

1*ſt*, The evil and diſadvantage of Inſtability and and unſtedfaſtneſs appears in theſe particulars.

1. Inſtability in the faith is hateful to God, who ſays, "If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him," Heb. x. 38. It provokes God to reject people, and to ſpew them out of his mouth. And why ſo? Becauſe,

2. Inſtability in the faith is a greatly aggravated ſin: it is a ſin againſt knowledge; and the ſervant who knows his maſter's will, and does it not, is to be beaten with double ſtripes. It is a ſin againſt profeſſion and engagements, whether national or perſonal, in baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper. It is a ſin againſt great love and mercy.

3. Inſtability in the faith has fearful idolatry wrapt up in it. When, by unbelief, we depart from the fountain of living waters, we turn to earthen ciſterns, which can hold no water.

4. Inſtability

4. Inſtability in the faith is the greateſt reproach; it is a leaving of God, even after experience: few have a profeſſion of faith, but have taſted ſomething of the ſweetneſs of God's ways; and now, to prefer ſin and luſts, what a reproach is caſt upon God?

5. Inſtability in the faith is worſe than profaneneſs, 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22. "It had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment." Inſtability being the porch of apoſtacy, where this is total, it is worſe than profanity; for it is a greater ſin to renounce Chriſt, than to refuſe him.

6. Inſtability provokes God to write a bill of divorce againſt a people; it is a ſin that ſeparates between God and them: it is juſt with God to caſt them off, when they caſt him off. And, wo to a people when God departs from them.

2*dly*, The next thing was to ſpeak of the good and advantage of Stability and eſtabliſhment in the faith: and therein it will appear, that it is a church or people's ſtrength to ſit ſtill, and abide in the faith. The advantage of ſtability in the faith may appear in the following particulars.

1. Eſtabliſhment in the faith puts a man in capacity to act for God, Iſa. xi. 31. "They that wait on the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength." And again, "They that know their God, ſhall be ſtrong and do exploits," Dan. xi. 32. They have ſtrength to do for Chriſt: if we abide in Chriſt, by faith then we bring forth fruit to the praiſe of God.

2. Stability in the faith puts a man in caſe to ſuffer for Chriſt, and to continue with him in his temptation; and thereby the Chriſtian is made ſure of Chriſt's legacy; "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom." This legacy is ſecured by the death of the Teſtator, Luke xxii. 28. The men of the world think they have a poor bargain, who venture all for Chriſt; but let me ſee where there is ſuch a noble bargain, and ſo up-making for time and eternity.

3. Stability in the faith puts a man in caſe to die for Chriſt, if he be called to it, Acts xxii. 13. "What mean ye to weep, and break mine heart? I am content not only

to be bound, but even to die at Jeruſalem for the name of Jeſus." His friends were weeping becauſe he was going up to Jeruſalem, where bonds and impriſonments were abiding him; but ſays he, " I am content not only to be bound, but to die at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus:" I value my life as well as you do; but when my life, and the Lord of life comes in competition, my life ſhall go, tho' I had a thouſand lives.

4. Stability in the faith puts a man in caſe to defeat the devil; for, by faith, we quench his fiery darts, and reſiſt him ſtedfaſtly in the faith. Satan ſought to winnow Peter, but Chriſt prayed for him, and that his faith might not fail. This ſays, the devil has a ſieve wherein he ſifts and winnows, and winnows both miniſters and people: and we may well affirm, that Satan has the miniſters and Chriſtians of Scotland now in a ſieve, and he is ſifting and riddling them: and it is like, more chaff than good corn will be found among us: but as for theſe that are ſtable in the faith, Satan loſes his pains and his profit with them; for, they will be able to overcome, by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their teſtimony.

5. Stability in the faith makes a man reach the deſign both of the word and rod: it is the end of both to eſtabliſh us in the faith; wherefore comes the word to us, but that we may believe and be ſtrong in the faith? Wherefore comes the rod, but that by the trial of faith it may be ſtrengthened and confirmed? So that upon on a man that is eſtabliſhed in the faith, both word and rod have got their errand; none of them are in vain.

6. Stability in the faith is an honourable duty and exerciſe; for, faith is the crown, and ſtedfaſtneſs therein is a keeping of the crown, Rev. iii. 11. " Behold, I come quickly; hold faſt what thou haſt, that no man take thy crown:" and he lays no other burden upon us but this, " Hold faſt till I come," Rev. ii. 24, 25.

7. Stability in the faith proves a man to be a true diſciple, John viii. 31, 32. " If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples; and ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free." Men may reckon themſelves free by human laws and acts, tho' yet they abide not in

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the truth; but they that know the truth, and abide in it, are free by an act of the court of heaven.

8. Stability in the faith influences our growth in every grace; we will never add grace to grace, experience to experience, and faith to faith, unless we be stable in the faith; "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." When we are stedfast and immoveable, then we are always abounding in the work of the Lord. Except we ply the oars close, we will go down the stream.

9. Stability in the faith evidences sincerity and uprightness of heart, even as instability evidences hypocrisy, Psal. xxvii. 37. "Their heart was not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his covenant." Their unstedfastness discovered that their heart was not right with God. Now, if you be steady and stable in the faith, it will discover that your heart was right with God, and that is the great matter.

10. Stability in the faith makes a man useful in his generation; though he were alone, yet he is useful, as Noah, of whom God says, Gen. vii. 1. "Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark, for thee only have I found righteous before me in this generation." How useful was he to the preservation of a remnant! Elijah was alone as a prophet; and how useful was he in his day? He is called the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And though a man that is stable in the faith were of no other use, but to give his testimony for God, exonerate himself in his day, it is a matter of consequence to the generation, both past, present, and to come.

We need, Sirs, at this day, to exonerate ourselves at the hands of our forefathers, who are gone; at the hands of our children, who are living; and at the hands of our posterity, that are to come. O Sirs, it is a question we should pose ourselves with, Are we faithful to our fathers that went before us? Are we faithful to these that are cotemporary with us? And, are we faithful to these that are following after us, when we ourselves are rotten in the dust?—What are we doing, to exonerate ourselves at the hand of our forefathers, who travailed night and day to get a covenanted work of Re-

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formation brought to the pattern of God's word, and committed it to us, having left it whole and found at our doors? Alas! how is this work marred and defaced among our hands! How has the generation betrayed the truſt our fathers committed to us?—What are we doing to exonerate ourſelves at the hand of the preſent generation? Are we contending for the faith, and for the cauſe of Chriſt, againſt thoſe that are betraying it? And, what are we doing to exonerate ourſelves at the hands of our poſterity? Are we tranſmitting Reformation-work whole and ſound to them? Or, rather, are we not tranſmitting to them poiſon, inſtead of wholſom food; traſh, inſtead of truth; lumber and droſs, inſtead of ſilver and gold; and counterfeit, inſtead of good coin?

In a word, ſtability in the faith is our ſtrength and ſafety, becauſe it is God himſelf, Chriſt himſelf, that is our ſtrength and ſafety; he is the Strength of Iſrael; and therefore, our ſtrength lies in ſitting ſtill, and ſitting near to him: our ſtrength lies not in the act of faith, otherwiſe it were enough to have once ſat down upon this foundation; but it lies in the object and ground of faith, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the Lord our righteouſneſs and ſtrength, on which alone true faith doth reſt and ſit ſtill: when we ſtay, by faith, in the midſt of our ſtrong tower, we are ſafe, becauſe the ſtrong tower is our ſafety: the ſtrength of faith is God himſelf in Chriſt: therefore to abide in him, to ſit ſtill and reſt on him alone, is our ſtrength. When a man runs to, and reſts upon an impregnable rock, where he is ſafe from the enemy, we do not mean that it is his act of reſting there that ſecures him, but the rock on which he reſts; yet we ſay, it is his ſtrength to ſit ſtill upon the rock, becauſe the rock is his ſtrength: ſo it is our ſtrength to ſit ſtill on the Rock of ages; becauſe Chriſt, the Rock of ages, is our ſtrength; and when, by unbelief, we depart from him, then we deſert our ſtrength.

IV. The next thing was the Application. All the application I offer at the time is in a few Inferences.

1. If it be ſo, as has been ſaid, hence ſee, what to think of theſe who are ſo far from being ſtedfaſt in the

faith,

faith, that they are ſtedfaſt in a courſe of ſin; inſtead of ſitting ſtill upon the Rock of ages, they are ſitting ſtill upon ſandy foundations that will ſink with them; they ſit ſtill in their ſins, and ſit ſtill in their errors, and ſit ſtill in their ſloth and ſecurity. Oh! how dreadful and terrible is their caſe! For God is ſaying to ſuch, Rev. xxii. 11. "He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill; he who is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill;" he that is erroneous, let him be erroneous ſtill; he who is wicked and ungodly, let him be ſo ſtill; he who is joined to his idols, let him alone. God is ſaying, Miniſters, let him alone; ordinances, let him alone; providences, let him alone; my Spirit, let him alone; "My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with men upon earth."

2. Hence we may ſee what to think of the church of Scotland at this day; how dangerous her circumſtances are, when inſtead of ſitting ſtill, and remaining ſtedfaſt in the faith, ſhe is receding and running away from her ancient Reformation-principles and purity. How unſtable, like water, is the generation! How great is the apoſtaſy and defection of the day! And here we may ſee, if there ſhall be any ſchiſm, or ſeparation, in the church of Scotland very ſoon upon the preſent emergency *, that you all know of, who will be the ſchiſmatics and ſeparatiſts? Surely not theſe who ſit ſtill and remain ſtedfaſt in the faith, and upon the old foundation, but theſe who go off from our Reformation-principles: theſe that ſit ſtill, are the ſtrength and ſafety of a church, they that riſe and turn away, the ruin thereof.

3. Hence ſee matter whereby every one may try their ſtate and their ſtrength, by trying what ſtability they have in the faith. Have you a ſtable and ſtrong faith? (1.) Strong faith is a fighting faith; it fights againſt all diſcouragements, and overcomes the greateſt difficulties and trials, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. Hab. iii. 17, 18. Heb. xi. 33, 34.; againſt the greateſt temptations to ſin, Heb. xi. 24, 25. (2.) It is a reſolute and wilful faith; "Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him." It ſtands not at providences ſeemingly contradicting the promiſes,

* Our Author here, without doubt, alludes to the conduct of the Church-judicatories, in their proſecution at this time carrying on againſt the four Brethren, *formerly briefly narrated*, p. 298.

Rom. iv. 19, 20.; againſt all diſcouragements; "Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul?" (3.) It is a wreſtling faith; "I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me." (4.) It is a violent faith; "The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (5.) It is a diſputing faith, it diſputes every inch; "Truth, Lord, I am a dog; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's table," Mat. xv. 22. (6.) It is an urging and arguing faith; it preſſes God with arguments taken from his own name, his own Son, his own promiſe, and his own perfections; mercy, faithfulneſs, truth, &c. (7.) It is a touching faith; *Turba premit, fides tangit,* Luke viii. 33,—48. (8.) It is an humbling faith, bringing in the deepeſt humility: the more confirmed and eſtabliſhed a perſon is, the more humble. Thus Abraham; "Who am I, that have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the Lord, which am but duſt and aſhes?" Job, when eſtabliſhed; "Now I abhor myſelf." Iſaiah, when he got a confirming manifeſtation, ſays, "I am unclean." Paul alſo, a confirmed Chriſtian, "I am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints." (9.) It is a faith that removes all legal fears, terrors, and torments, and yet increaſes godly-ſorrow and goſpel-repentance. It lives on Chriſt, and not on frames and enlargements; the doubting Chriſtian is up and down with his frames, if that be gone, he thinks all is loſt; but the eſtabliſhed believer is ſecured in Chriſt, and his everlaſting righteouſneſs; even when the mutable frame is gone, it is not diſcouraged.

4. Hence ſee the duty both of ſinners and ſaints, or believers.

[1.] Of ſinners, to ſit down; we cannot exhort you to ſit ſtill, till once you ſit down, and take reſt in Chriſt. And therefore, O ſinner, ſit down and reſt upon a God in Chriſt as your rock and reſting-place. Let me adviſe you, take a ſeat for your ſouls to ſit upon. Some of you know what an uneaſy thing it is to want a ſeat for your body, when you are weary walking or weary ſtanding; well, much more uneaſy will it be if you want a ſeat of reſt for your ſouls. Would you have your ſouls rightly ſeated and rightly ſettled? Will you tell me, can you find ſuch a right ſeat in all the world, as a God in Chriſt? Is there any ſeat or centre ſo proper for the ſoul? Is not God the ſeat

and

and centre of the intellectual world? the centre of ſpirits, in whom they can find reſt? Is the world a proper ſeat for your ſouls to ſit down upon? Though you had your barns full, and were ſaying, "Soul, take thy reſt, thou haſt goods laid up for many years;" how ſoon can God ſay, "Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee."—Is your own righteouſneſs a proper ſeat for your ſoul to ſit down and reſt upon, when your righteouſneſs is but filthy rags; and when there is as much ſin in your beſt duties as would damn you? Is it poſſible you can think, when death and judgment is before you, that you ſit ſafely enough there? or, do you think that the devil, the world, or the fleſh, can give you reſt and ſatisfaction, though you had all the advantages they can offer you? O ſinner, are you ſeeking to ſettle on this ſide Jordan? Though you ſhould ſit eaſy till the day of death, what will become of you upon the day of judgment? But would you have a ſeat on which you may find everlaſting reſt in death, judgment, and through eternity? Then, O come to Chriſt for reſt, and ſit down upon the Rock of ages. Here is a high and honourable ſeat; whenever you come to God you dwell on high, you ſit with Chriſt in heavenly places.—Here is a ſoft and eaſy ſeat, "He will keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on him, becauſe he truſteth in him." Here you may get reſt to your underſtandings in Chriſt, as a Prophet; reſt to your conſciences in him, as a Prieſt; reſt to your hearts in him, as a King.—Here is a ſafe ſeat; when you reſt upon Chriſt for ſalvation, you cannot but be ſafe; *He that believes ſhall be ſaved.* Your deſires will ſit ſafely upon him, who is *the Deſire of all nations;* your hope will ſit ſafely on him, who is *the Hope of Iſrael;* your delight will ſit ſafely on him, who is the Darling of heaven. Here is a ſure ſeat, *the ſure mercies of David;* a firm ſeat, that cannot fail you in the day of need, and in the time of extremity. The covenant of works was not a firm and ſure ſeat; and to ſit down either directly or indirectly upon the works of the law, is a ſandy foundation.—Here is a ready ſeat, and juſt at hand; you need not ſay, We cannot aſcend to heaven, to ſit down upon this ſeat; It is near at hand, *I bring near my righteouſneſs;*

neſs; and this righteouſneſs is the ſeat you are to ſit down upon.—And it is an everlaſting ſeat, an everlaſting righteouſneſs, where you may ſit ſafe and eaſy for ever. O ſeek not reſt any where elſe; ſit down under the ſhadow of the Almighty. But you may aſk, How ſhall I ſit down? Why, be convinced of the ſinfulneſs of your rambling among the creatures for help, relief, and reſt; and that "In vain is ſalvation looked for from the hills or from the multitude of mountains." Tho' you were to ſit down upon mountains of prey, mountains of gold or ſilver, this would not give reſt or relief to your ſouls; "Riches profit not in the day of wrath." Mountains of creature-aids and outward means will not do; therefore, cry to God, that he may ſet your feet upon a rock; upon himſelf, the Rock of ages; and cauſe you to ſit down under his ſhadow. The almighty power muſt make you willing and able: O cry then for a day of power.

[2.] The duty of ſaints, is to ſit ſtill and abide in Chriſt by faith, and to ſit ſtill in reſpect of ſtability in the faith. And that I may the more diſtinctly direct you to this, I would have you conſider this ſtability,

(1.) As a privilege ſecured to you; this ſhould excite you to it; for, as in working out ſalvation-work, we could have no encouragement, if God had not promiſed to work in us, both to will and to do; ſo, in ſtability in the faith, we could have no encouragement, if this ſtability was not ſecured.

(2.) Conſider it is a duty; and I would direct you to it in the following particulars.

1. O believer, labour after growth in grace; and, particularly, after eſtabliſhing grace: There are theſe eſtabliſhing graces;—Knowledge, Iſa. xxxiii. 6. "Wiſdom and knowledge ſhall be the ſtability of the times. The people that know their God ſhall be ſtrong, and do exploits," Dan. ix. 32.—Faith, Iſa. vii. 9. "If ye will not believe, ſurely ye ſhall not be eſtabliſhed." See 2 Chron. xx. 20.—Patience, James v. 8. "Be patient, and ſtabliſh your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."—Love, Song viii. 6, 7. "Love is ſtrong as death, &c.: Many waters cannot quench love," &c. Joy, Neh. viii. 12. "The joy of the Lord is their ſtrength."

Humility,

Humility, James iv. 6. Self-confidence is the greateſt weakneſs; Peter was weak when proud; humility is a man's going out of himſelf, and laying all his weight upon the Lord, who looks to the humble, hears the deſires of the humble, and gives grace to the humble.—Fear, Pſalm cxii. 1. 8. "Bleſſed is the man that feareth the Lord; he ſhall not be afraid of evil-tidings, his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord; his heart is eſtabliſhed," &c.—Hope, Pſalm xl. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 24. 1 John iii. 3.—Again, as you would endeavour, through grace, to grow in eſtabliſhed graces; ſo,

2. To improve eſtabliſhing means: Prayer is an eſtabliſhing mean, Pſalm cxxxviii. 3. "I cried to the Lord, and he anſwered me, and ſtrengthened me with ſtrength in my ſoul."—Praiſe, Pſalm xliii. 4, 5. "Upon the harp will I praiſe thee:" then it follows, "Why art thou caſt down, my ſoul? and why art thou diſquieted in me? ſtill hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him."—Communicating, while he is known in the breaking of bread, the bread of life is ſtrengthening.—Fellowſhip with the ſaints, confirming one another, Heb. x. 23, 24, 25. "As iron ſharpeneth iron, ſo doth the countenance of a man his friend."—Diligent attendance on ordinances; the voice of Chriſt is quickening and ſtrengthening: *Faith comes by hearing;* and eſtabliſhment in faith comes the ſame way.—Meditation, and ſpiritual converſation, and communication, are ſtrengthening.

3. Seek after eſtabliſhed manifeſtations, John ii. 11. "He manifeſted forth his glory, and his diſciples believed on him:" that is, their faith was eſtabliſhed and confirmed.—Manifeſtations have a convincing light, and over-powering evidence, making clouds flee away, and daſhing the bottom out of all their doubts; thus Thomas, *My Lord, and my God.*—Manifeſtations have an inſtructive light; from darkneſs, wavering proceeds; and what we know darkly we eaſily ſuſpect: but ſee Pſalm xx. 6. "Now, I know that the Lord ſaves his anointed:" that is, now I underſtand it more diſtinctly.—In manifeſtations there are taſtes of his goodneſs and ſweetneſs, and this is a ſpring of ſtability: dry notions will never make a man ſtable: while the truth is not received in love, they will

will ſoon quit it for deluſion; but when they have a ſenſe of it, then their ſenſe will plead better than learning and rhetoric; like a philoſopher telling a man the ſun is not ſhining, the graſs is not green.—Manifeſtations carry power in them: there is a heart-burning power; this power will embolden the believer to avouch and plead for the truth, whoſoever be againſt it, and whatever it coſts, when they find the good effects of it in their own ſouls.—Manifeſtations carry ſtill a ſuitableneſs to the caſe, trial, and neceſſity of the perſon to whom he manifeſts himſelf: when Abraham is to leave his father's houſe, and to go, not knowing whither; to leave friends, means, relations; the Lord manifeſts himſelf to him as God Almighty, God All-ſufficient.—Theſe manifeſtations exactly meet with their neceſſities, and this makes them abide by him.—Manifeſtations always humble; and humility is the ſtrength of all other graces: "What is the firſt grace? humility, ſaid one of the fathers: What is the next? humility: What is the third? humility;" and ſo on, intimating, that this is a bulwark to every other grace. Hence,

4. Take heed of theſe things that hinder ſtability: as pride; "Pride goes before a fall. God reſiſts the proud." Remember Peter.—Worldlineſs: 2 Tim. iv. 10. "Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world," 2 Tim. vi. 9, 10.—Idleneſs; "The hand of the diligent maketh rich;" but idleneſs makes him poor in grace, poor in purſe.—Needleſs fellowſhip with wicked company; "He that walks with the wiſe, ſhall be wiſe; but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed. A man ſhall not be eſtabliſhed by wickedneſs," Prov. xii. 3. But the heart is eſtabliſhed by grace.

5. Seek much after eſtabliſhing breathings of the Holy Ghoſt. The diſciples were letting their grips go, and Chriſt breathed on them, and ſays, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.* Much of the Spirit will bring about much reformation in the matters of God. Be content of the Spirit's comforting and ſupporting influences, under trials, without ſeeking any viſible ſigns for your confirmation. The Jews ſeek a ſign from Chriſt, but ſays he, "No ſign ſhall be given you, but that of the prophet Jonas;

Jonas; as Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Here is the ſign, ye ſhall get many a croſs; and I will ſtrengthen you to bear them; and if you be not ſatisfied with theſe ſigns, ye will but tempt him. All the breathings of the Spirit are of an eſtabliſhing nature; his quickening, ſanctifying, and comforting influences. Wait the time of the Spirit's breathing, and of this wind of heaven blowing. Wait at the ſhore, though you cannot command the wind to blow; and be eaſy, though he reſerves the ſweeteſt confirmation to the ſaddeſt times. Chriſt cures the blind man, John ix.; the Phariſees drag him out from court to court, till at laſt they caſt him out and excommunicate him; but then Chriſt took him in, and manifeſted himſelf; "Doſt thou now believe? Who is he that I ſhould believe?" ſays the man; Chriſt ſhows himſelf to him, and then he believed and worſhipped. Well, perhaps a time of ſweet conſolation and confirmation is reſerved till ye be caſt out by a corrupt kirk and clergy, or to a more troubleſome time, when you are at the extremity. He will ſeaſon all with a new manifeſtation, a new communication.

6. Be cautious, and jealous of yourſelves, and watchful; "Let him who thinks he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall." Perhaps, you have laid up ſome truths in your boſom beyond all debate, but in the hour of trial you may be in hazard to quit them: who would have thought that the diſciples would debate whether Chriſt was the Saviour of the world, the Saviour of Iſrael, after the many confirmations he gave of this? Yet, they not only debate it, but are in hazard to quit it, Luke xxiv. 22. Oh! it would make a heart break to hear ſuch language; "We thought he was the Saviour of Iſrael, he that ſhould have redeemed Iſrael:" there it was all quit to a thought. O then, Sirs, beware of witchcraft; "O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" &c. Gal. iii. 1. The devil and his inſtruments ſometimes caſt a kind of faſcination over our eyes, to hide the beautiful face of truth, to make it look ill-favoured; beware of the devil's deception, he can make perjury look like prudence, and

honeſty, like rebellion againſt judicatories, &c. You may be confirmed in the faith, and yet make ſuch a ſudden change, as to cauſe all honeſt miniſters and Chriſtians wonder at you, as Paul ſays, Gal. i. 6. "I marvel that ye are ſo ſoon removed from him who hath called you to another goſpel." Beware of letting the fear of loſſes and croſſes affrighten you; you may make fair offers of following Chriſt, and yet forſake him in the view of the croſs. There came a man to Chriſt, Matth. viii. 19. ſaying, Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt:" Chriſt will hardly get a fairer offer from any here; but what ſays Chriſt to him? "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have neſts, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." What hinders the performance of this fair offer? Why, you muſt make yourſelf ready for loſſes and croſſes, and follow Chriſt naked. Many men and women come the length of the croſs, and there they bury all their reſolutions. The croſs has been the burial-place of many vows and promiſes; therefore, ſee that you be not ſcared and terrified with the fear of loſſes and croſſes; know that what you loſe for Chriſt will be the ſureſt gain.

I might here add ſome encouragements to engage you to this duty.

(1.) If ſtability in the faith is the ſtrength and ſecurity of the church, in the moſt perilous times, then let us ſit ſtill and be ſtable, becauſe the moſt perilous time is the very ſeaſon wherein God has in all generations, made the moſt ſignal appearances for his church, in ſo much, that we have no more ado, in effect, when perilous times come, but to ſtand ſtill; or, which is the ſame thing, to ſit ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of God. Here I would offer eight inſtances of ſignal appearances in moſt perilous times: particularly in the firſt defection by ſin; when our firſt parents fell; there God appeared in the firſt promiſe, wherein the devil was ſentenced.—Iſrael's oppreſſion in Egypt; then is Moſes born; then the Lord appeared glorioufly.—The Aſſyrians rage, under Sennacherib, againſt Jeruſalem; then the Lord ſent his angel.—Haman threatened the deſtruction of the Jews; then the Lord appeared, and brought about their deliverance.

verance.—Chriſt the Head laid in the grave, then the Lord appeared making that dark hour the porch of light and life.—The Jewiſh and Pagan perſecutions againſt the firſt Chriſtians, the Lord made theſe the mean of propagating the goſpel, and the blood of the martyrs the ſeed of the church. — The antichriſtian tyranny, wherein the whore was drunk with ſo much blood, iſſued in the glorious Reformation; the Lord appearing in his glory, building up Zion.—The bloody reigns in Britain, particularly in Scotland; the martyrdom in the late times, iſſued in the Lord's appearing by the merciful Revolution.—And now, when troubles and trials take place, our God is not dead; "He will ariſe and have mercy upon Zion. The Lord ſits upon the floods: the Lord ſits King for ever." Hence,

(2.) To ſit ſtill in perilous times, is to ſit where God ſits; he ſits upon the floods, and they ſit with Chriſt upon his throne, not only when they come to heaven, but by faith upon earth; they ſit and reign with Chriſt; as they ſhall judge the world at the laſt day, ſo they rule and judge even in this life, Pſalm ii. 9. compared with Rev. ii. 26, 27. and with Pſalm cxlix. 6, 7, 8, 9. This is the honour of all the ſaints; and hence the ſaints who are faithful to God in their day, not only judge and condemn the world, by their practice and their teſtimony, but in ſome reſpects execute the ſentence againſt them, ſo as to torment them, Rev. xi. 10. "The two witneſſes tormented them who dwelt upon the earth."

(3.) To ſit ſtill is to ſit eaſy amidſt all the overflowing floods, becauſe we ſit ſtill and reſt upon him who ſits upon the floods: this may give eaſe amidſt whatever floods you are ſurrounded with. Is it a flood of tribulation, temptation, reproach? &c. "The Lord ſits upon the floods," and makes the floods his footſtool, his throne. He treads upon the floods, and reigns amidſt the floods, and makes the floods his chariot, wherein he rides, and his bench, whereon he judges righteouſly.

(4.) When we ſit ſtill by faith, we glorify God, and edify men; we honour God, and exonerate ourſelves at the hands of men, both in the former, preſent, and following generations, as I ſaid before.

SERMON LXXXVI.

FAITH's PLEA upon GOD's COVENANT *.

PSALM lxxiv. 20.

Have reſpect unto the Covenant.—

THE pſalmiſt, in pleading for the church and people of God, and that he would appear for them againſt their enemies, uſes ſeveral arguments; particularly, in the cloſe of the preceding verſe, there is ſomething he pleads God may not forget, "Forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever:" and the rather he uſes this argument, becauſe he had ſaid, Pſalm ix. 18. "The needy ſhall not be forgotten; the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever." There is, in this verſe, ſomething he pleads, that God may remember and have regard unto, *Have reſpect unto the Covenant.* Thou haſt brought us into covenant with thee, might he ſay, and though we are unworthy to be reſpected, yet, *Have reſpect unto the Covenant* of promiſe. When God delivers his people, it is in rememberance of his covenant, Lev. xxvi. 42. "Then will I remember my covenant with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; and I will remember the land." We cannot expect he will remember us, till he remember his covenant: hence, therefore, we propoſe to illuſtrate the following truth.

* This was an evening-exerciſe on a preparation-day, before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Kinglaſſie. The exact time cannot be preciſely aſcertained; but it is ſuppoſed to have been in the year 1733.

DOCT.

Doct. That one of faith's ſtrong pleas with God is, that he would have reſpect to the covenant.

If we would deal with God for mercy, or plead with him for favour, or look to him for any good at this occaſion, let us expect it only upon this ground, the reſpect he hath to the covenant, and plead upon this argument.

The method we would obſerve, as the Lord ſhall aſſiſt, for briefly handling this ſubject, ſhall be the following.

I. Shew what covenant it is he will have a reſpect to.

II. What it is for God to have a reſpect to the covenant.

III. What it is in the covenant he hath a reſpect to.

IV. What kind of a reſpect he hath to it.

V. Why he hath reſpect to it, and ſo why it is a ſuitable plea and argument in ſuing for mercy.

VI. Make ſome application of the whole.

I. We are then firſt to ſhew what covenant it is he will have a reſpect to. The covenant here ſpoken of is the covenant of grace and promiſe, made in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began, and publiſhed in the goſpel to ſinners. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh, &c. Jer. xxxi. 45. But this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, After thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my people." See alſo Pſal. lxxxix. throughout. It is called a covenant of grace; becauſe grace is the beginning and the end, the foundation and top-ſtone of it: even grace reigning through righteouſneſs.—It is called a covenant of mercy; be-

becauſe therein mercy to the miſerable is proclaimed thro' juſtice-ſatisfying blood; for there mercy and truth meet together: and all the ſure mercies of David are conveyed thereby.—It is called a covenant of peace and reconciliation; becauſe it both treats of peace with God, and makes it good.—It is called a covenant of promiſe: becauſe it lies in promiſes with reference to us; and theſe to be accompliſhed upon the condition already fulfilled in Chriſt's obedience and ſatisfaction; and becauſe therein the faithfulneſs of God is pledged, for making out all the promiſes to believers, the children of promiſe.—It is called a covenant of ſalt; becauſe it is an incorruptible word, "An everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things and ſure."—In a word, it is a covenant of help to poor, helpleſs ſinners, ſaying, "I have laid help upon One that is mighty. O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thy help."—It is a covenant of pardon to the guilty, ſaying, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and I will not remember thy ſins."—It is a covenant of ſupply to the needy, ſaying, "When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Iſrael, will not forſake them." It is a covenant of gifts, wherein grace and glory are freely given; and, in the diſpenſation thereof, God ſays, Come, and take all freely; Himſelf, his Chriſt, his Spirit, and all, Rev. xxii. 17. Iſa. lv. 1.

II. We are to ſhew what it is for God to have reſpect to the covenant.

1. God hath reſpect to the covenant when he remembers it, and ſo remembers us, as in that forecited, Lev. xxvi. 24. "I will remember my covenant, and then will I remember the land. Thus Pſal. cxi. 5. He hath given meat to them that fear him." Why, he will ever be mindful of his covenant. If he come to give us meat to feed our ſouls at this occaſion, the ground will be, he will be mindful of his covenant, mindful of his promiſe.

2. God may be ſaid to have reſpect to his covenant, when he regards it. He hath no reaſon to have reſpect or regard to us, but he ſees reaſon to have regard to his

co-

covenant; he puts honour upon it, for reaſons that I ſhall afterwards ſhew, only I will ſay here, his honour is engaged therein, therefore he ſays, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips," Pſal. lxxxix. 34. He hath more regard to it than he hath to heaven and earth; for he ſays, "Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not paſs away." He hath ſuch a regard to it, that he will never break it, but ever keep it.

3. He hath reſpect to his covenant, when he eſtabliſhes it. And when we pray, that he would have reſpect to the covenant, we not only pray he would remember the covenant, and regard the covenant, but eſtabliſh the covenant betwixt him and us, as he ſaid to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7. "I will eſtabliſh it between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee." He ſhews reſpect to the covenant, when he makes the covenant take hold of us, and makes us take hold of the covenant; for then he makes us put reſpect upon him, and upon his covenant.

4. He hath reſpect to the covenant, when he performs the covenant-promiſes, according to Mic. vii. 20. "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou haſt ſworn to our fathers from the days of old:" and he does this, when he acts according to the covenant, or according to the mercy that made the promiſe, and the truth that is engaged to make out the promiſe.

In ſhort, the ſum of this prayer, as it concerns the import of the word RESPECT, *Have reſpect to the covenant*, is, "Lord, remember the covenant, and ſo re-
"member me; Lord, have regard to the covenant,
"and let me be remembered on this ground, when
"there is no other reaſon why I ſhould be regarded;
"Lord, eſtabliſh thy covenant with me, and ſo put ho-
"nour upon thy name manifeſted in that covenant, and
"do to me according to the promiſe of the covenant.
"Cauſe me hope in thy word, and then remember the
"word on which thou haſt cauſed me to hope; and deal
"with me, not according to my ſin and deſert, but
"according to thy covenant and mercy in Chriſt Je-
"ſus."

III. We

III. We are next to ſhew what it is in the covenant he hath a reſpect to, or that we ſhould plead upon.

1. Have reſpect to the covenant; that is, to the Mediator of the covenant. Though thou oweſt no reſpect to me, yet doeſt thou not owe reſpect, and haſt thou not a great reſpect to the Mediator of the covenant, to Chriſt, whom thou haſt given to be a covenant of the people? For his ſake let me be pitied; have reſpect to the relation he bears to the covenant, even to him who is the Mediator, Teſtator, Witneſs, Meſſenger, Surety, and All of the covenant. Have reſpect to his offices, and let him get the glory of his ſaving offices. It is a ſtrong plea to plead with God upon the reſpect he bears to Chriſt, God cannot win over ſuch a plea as that. He muſt own his regard and reſpect to Chriſt, who paid ſuch reſpect to him, and finiſhed the work he gave him to do.

2. Have reſpect to the covenant, by having reſpect to the blood of the covenant. The blood of Chriſt, that is repreſented in the ſacrament of the ſupper, it is the blood of the covenant, called, The new teſtament in his blood; becauſe all the promiſes are ſealed therewith, and ſo Yea and Amen in Chriſt: this is the condition of the new covenant. The covenant of works had only the active obedience of the firſt Adam for its condition; but the condition of the covenant of grace properly, is both the active and paſſive obedience of the ſecond Adam, his doing and dying. Now, Lord, have reſpect to that blood that ſealed the covenant: ſince the condition is fulfilled to thy infinite ſatisfaction, let the promiſed good be conferred upon me.

3. Have reſpect to the covenant, by having reſpect to the oath of the covenant, Heb. vi. 17. The promiſe is confirmed with the oath of God; "That by two immutable things, wherein it is impoſſible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong conſolation," &c. Now, Lord, wilt thou not have reſpect to thine own oath? Haſt thou not ſworn by thy holineſs, thou wilt not lie unto David?

4. Have reſpect to the covenant, by having a reſpect to the properties of the covenant. This would be a large field; I ſum it up in a few words. Have reſpect to the covenant; that is, Lord, have reſpect to the fulneſs of the

the covenant, and let me be ſupplied, for there is enough there; it contains all my ſalvation, and all my deſire.—Have reſpect to the freedom of the covenant, and let me, however unworthy, ſhare of the grace that runs freely thence.—Have reſpect to the ſtability of the covenant, and let me be pitied, though unſtable as water, and infirm, yet the covenant ſtands faſt; remember thy word that endures for ever.—Have reſpect to the order of the covenant, that is well ordered in all things, as well as ſure. "Tho' my houſe be not ſo with God, ſays David, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things, and ſure." Tho' my houſe be out of order, and heart out of order, and my frame out of order, and all be in confuſion with me, yet ſee, according to thy covenant, to order all well.

IV. We proceed to ſhew what kind of a reſpect he hath to the covenant, that we may be the more engaged to plead upon it.

1. He hath a great and high reſpect to the covenant. It is the covenant of the great God, with his great and eternal Son, for the honour and glory of his great name; and therefore, he cannot but have a great and high reſpect unto it. His great name is manifeſted in it; and therefore, when we plead his reſpect to the covenant, we plead, in effect, ſaying, "What will thou do for thy great name?"

2. He hath a dear and lovely reſpect to the covenant; for, it is the covenant of his grace and love, wherein he ſhews his infinite love to Chriſt, and thro' him to a company of wretched ſinners. It is a covenant of kindneſs, Iſa. liv. 10. "My kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee;" intimating, his covenant of peace, is a covenant of kindneſs, wherein he manifeſts his deareſt love; therefore, he hath a dear reſpect to it.

3. He hath a full reſpect to the covenant, a reſpect to every promiſe of it; *They are all Yea and Amen, to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20. He hath a reſpect to all of them becauſe they are all Yea and Amen, and becauſe they are all ratified in Chriſt, to the glory of God. He hath a re-

a reſpect to every article of the covenant, "Not a jot ſhall fall to the ground."

4. He hath an everlaſting reſpect to the covenant; therefore, it is called an everlaſting covenant: it is ſecured by an everlaſting righteouſneſs; it is made between everlaſting parties; it is repleniſhed with everlaſting bleſſings; it is rooted in his everlaſting love: therefore he is ever mindful of his covenant, and will never ceaſe to have a reſpect to it.

Well then, ſay you, what need we pray and plead, that he would have reſpect to his covenant? Why, if it be ſure that he hath, and will for ever have, a reſpect to the covenant, then we may pray with the more aſſurance and confidence; ſo that there is here ſtrong footing for our prayer: but beſides, when we pray, and ſay, *Have reſpect unto the covenant*, we ſeek, that he would ſhew the reſpect that he hath unto it, that he would ſhew and make it manifeſt unto us, that we may have the faith of it, and enjoy the fruits of it, and the bleſſed effects of that reſpect to it, in our participations of the bleſſings thereof.

V. The next thing was, To ſhew why he will have reſpect to his covenant; and conſequently, whence it is ſuch a ſuitable plea and argument for us. Why,

1. When he hath a reſpect to the covenant, he hath reſpect to himſelf; the framer of it he owns himſelf to be, Pſal. lxxxix. 3. "I have made a covenant with my choſen." Why then, the ſtrength of the plea is, *Have reſpect to the covenant*, and ſo have reſpect to thyſelf, and thy own glorious name and attributes, and let them be glorified, in ſhewing regard to the covenant.—Have reſpect to thy wiſdom that ſhines in the contrivance of the covenant, "The manifold wiſdom of God; yea, the wiſdom of God in a myſtery," that here appears.—Have reſpect to thy power that ſhines in the efficacy of the covenant, not only for over-powering principalities and powers, but overcoming thyſelf, and the power of thine own wrath, by the power of thy love.—Have reſpect to thy holineſs, that ſhines in the holy oath of JEHOVAH, by which it is confirmed, and the holy obedience of Jeſus, by

which

which it is fulfilled; ſo that, as by the *ſinful* diſobedience of one, many were made ſinners, by the *holy* obedience of another *Glorious One*, many are made righteous.—Have reſpect to thy juſtice, that ſhines in the blood of the covenant, the ſacrifice by which juſtice hath got condign and infinite ſatisfaction.—Have reſpect to thy mercy and grace, that reigns thro' this righteouſneſs to eternal life.—Have reſpect to thy truth and faithfulneſs, that ſhines in accompliſhing all the promiſes of the covenant, upon the ground of Chriſt's having fulfilled the condition. Have reſpect unto thy eternity and immutability, in the unchangeableneſs of the covenant; ſhew that thou art God, and changeſt not.—Thus have reſpect to thyſelf.

2. When he hath reſpect to the covenant, he hath reſpect to his Son CHRIST, the centre of it, and in whom it ſtands faſt, as he owns, Pſal. lxxxix. 28. "My covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him." Why then, the ſtrength of the plea is, *Have reſpect to the covenant*, and ſo ſhew reſpect to thy Son: have reſpect to him in his perſon, as he is thy Son and our Saviour; IMMANUEL, God-man; in his divinity, wherein he is equal with God; in his humanity, wherein he is the maſter-piece of God's work. Have reſpect to him in his purchaſe, which is the ſubſtance of the covenant bought with his blood.—Have reſpect to his death and reſurrection; for thou loveſt him on this account, John x. 17. "Therefore doth the Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I may take it up again;" where we ſee that Chriſt, as dying and riſing in the room of his people, is the object of the Father's love, delight, and eſteem.—Have reſpect unto his interceſſion, wherein he prays for all the bleſſings of the covenant that he hath purchaſed: doth not the Father hear him always?—Have reſpect to his commiſſion, which is ſealed by thee; for, "Him hath God the Father ſealed," anointed, and authoriſed unto all ſaving offices, relations and appearances: let him get the glory of all theſe. O ſtrong plea!

3. When he hath reſpect to the covenant, he hath reſpect to his Spirit, the great applier of the covenant-bleſſings, and executor of the teſtament, ſealed with the blood of Chriſt, and by whom covenant-love is ſhed abroad

abroad upon the heart, Rom. v. 5. Why then, the ſtrength of the plea, "Have reſpect to the covenant;" that is, have reſpect to thy own Spirit, that he may get the glory of applying by his power, what Chriſt hath purchaſed by his blood.—Have reſpect to the promiſe of the Spirit that thou haſt made, that when he is come, he ſhall convince the world of ſin, righteouſneſs and judgment, and teſtify of Chriſt, and glorify Chriſt, by ſhewing the things of Chriſt.—Have reſpect to the offices of the Spirit, as he is a Convincer, Sanctifier, and Comforter, according to the order and method of the covenant.—Have reſpect to the honour of the Spirit, who is the *all in all* of the covenant, in point of power, and powerful manifeſtation, communication, and operation.—Have reſpect unto the relations of the Spirit, as he is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son; the Spirit of the covenant, and of all the covenanted ſeed. Hence,

4. When he hath reſpect to the covenant, he hath reſpect to his people, on the account of the covenant of promiſe; for, "They as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe," Gal. iv. 28. Why then, the ſtrength of the plea and argument here is, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant*, and ſo ſhew regard and reſpect to us. We have no confidence to claim any reſpect at thy hand, but merely upon the account of the reſpect thou haſt to thy covenant.—Have reſpect to our perſons on this ground, ſince the covenant provides acceptance in the Beloved, Eph. i. 6. Look upon us in the face of thine Anointed, and in the glaſs of the new covenant.—Have reſpect to our prayers and performances on this ground, ſince the covenant hath provided much incenſe, to perfume the prayers and offerings of all ſaints, upon the golden altar that is before the throne, Rev. viii. 3.—Have reſpect to our tears, when we ſigh and groan, and mourn and weep before thee, ſince the covenant provides a bottle for our tears, Pſal. lvi. 8. "Put thou my tears in thy bottle." Have reſpect to our needs on this ground, when we are hardened, that we can neither pray nor weep, nor ſhed a tear, ſince the covenant provides ſupply to the poor and needy, Phil. iv. 19. "My God ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches, in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus."

VI. I

VI. I would now proceed to make ſome Application of the ſubject in theſe four Inferences.

1. Hence ſee a mark and character of true believers, that are fit for a communion-table, they are of God's mind; he hath a reſpect to the covenant, and they have a reſpect unto the covenant; and hence they know what it is to plead with God upon the reſpect that he hath to the covenant: they could not do ſo, if they had not a high reſpect to it themſelves; they have ſuch a reſpect to the covenant in kind as God hath.—They have a great reſpect to it, ſo as they eſteem it more than all things in the world; they would not give one promiſe of it, on which they have been cauſed to hope, for all the gold of Ophir.—They have a dear and kindly reſpect to it, as all their ſalvation and all their deſire; yea, and all their delight alſo. The word of grace is ſweeter to them than the honey and the honey-comb.—They have a full and univerſal reſpect unto it, and to all the promiſes of it; they reſpect the promiſe of purity, as well as the promiſe of pardon; the promiſe of ſalvation from ſin, as well, and as much as the promiſe of ſalvation from hell; the promiſe of holineſs as well as of happineſs. As they have a reſpect to all God's commandments; ſo they have a reſpect to all God's promiſes; and particularly as David had his golden pſalms, ſo they have their golden promiſes that they are made to hing upon.—Yea, they have an everlaſting reſpect to the covenant, and to the promiſes thereof, even when their frame fails them; when their ſweet enjoyments fail them, yet their reſpect to the covenant remains, and their reſpect to the Maker of the covenant, to the Mediator of the covenant, to the blood and oath of the covenant, to the Spirit of the covenant, and to the bleſſings and benefits of it. They have an everlaſting reſpect to the grace of the covenant of grace; they are adorers and admirers of free grace. They have an everlaſting reſpect to, and remembrance of the words of the covenant, particularly theſe words that have been let in with any life and power upon their ſoul, or that they have been cauſed to hope upon; whatever they forget, they can never forget ſuch a word,

that brought life to their ſouls; "I will never forget thy words, ſays David; for by them thou haſt quickened me." They have ſuch an everlaſting reſpect to the covenant, that, when they have nothing in the world to truſt to, they will rely on the covenant, and confide in ſuch a promiſe, and plead upon it, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*

2. Hence we may ſee the miſery of theſe that are unbelievers, and remain ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe, and have no reſpect to the covenant. It is miſery enough, that God hath no reſpect to you; no reſpect to your perſon or prayers, as it is ſaid, "To Cain and his offerings God had no reſpect," Gen. iv. 5. So God hath no reſpect either to your perſons or performances; they are an abomination to him. Your prayers to him are but like the howling of a dog, if you have never taken hold of his covenant, nor ſeen the reſpect that God hath to the covenant. You have no reſpect to God, while you have no reſpect to that which he reſpects ſo highly.—And as he hath no reſpect to your perſons or performances, ſo he hath no reſpect to your tears; they never flowed from faith's views of a pierced Chriſt.—He hath no reſpect to your ſouls, the redemption thereof ceaſeth for ever, becauſe you have no due reſpect to the Redeemer's blood and righteouſneſs.—He hath no reſpect to your communicating; nay, he diſapproves of it, and diſcharges you to ſit down at his table, on peril of eating and drinking your own damnation.—God hath no regard nor reſpect to your ſalvation, becauſe you have no regard nor reſpect to the Saviour he hath provided and offered. God thinks as little to damn you, as you think little to diſhonour him. God thinks as little of you, as you think little of ſin; and he hath as little reſpect to you, as you have little reſpect to Chriſt and to the covenant. Wo to you, if you remain in this caſe; for the day is coming, wherein God will, before all the world, ſhew no more reſpect to you, than to ſay to you, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But,

3. Hence we may ſee the happineſs of believers, that have ſuch a reſpect to the covenant, as I was ſpeaking of,

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a great, dear, full, and perpetual reſpect to it, and to the Mediator of it, who have taken hold of the covenant through grace, and who knows what it is to take hold of God in the covenant, to take hold of God in a promiſe, and to hold him by his word, and rely upon him in it, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant*; here is your great happineſs, God hath a reſpect to you: What reſpect? Even to your perſons and offerings, as it is ſaid of Abel, Gen. iv. 4. God had a reſpect to him and to his offering. Though you be ſaying in your heart, Oh! how can he have a reſpect to me, black and vile, and guilty me? Why? not for your ſake indeed, be it known unto you, but for his covenant's ſake, and his name s ſake. He hath a reſpect to your praying and praiſing, and communicating; becauſe he hath a reſpect to the covenant.—He hath a reſpect to your name; though the name of the wicked ſhall rot, your name ſhall be in everlaſting remembrance; for God hath put his name in you; ſomething of Chriſt in you, ſomething of the covenant in you. Some obſerve, when Abram's name was turned to Abraham, that there was ſome of the letters of the name JEHOVAH put in Abram's name. Indeed, God gives the believer a new name, that he hath a reſpect unto.—He hath a reſpect to your ſuits and ſupplications; "I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the ſecret places of the ſtairs; let me hear thy voice, let me ſee thy countenance; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely."—He hath a reſpect to his beloved doves, when pouring out their hearts before him; that voice that the world laughs at, God hath a reſpect to it.—He hath a reſpect to your blood; "Precious in his ſight is the blood of his ſaints."—He hath a reſpect to your ſouls; and hence he gave his blood to be a ranſom for them; and when your ſouls languiſh, he ſends his Spirit to reſtore them; and when you die, he will ſend his angels to bring them to heaven.—He hath a reſpect to your bodies: you ought, being bought with a price, to glorify him in your ſouls and bodies, which are his. When your body goes to the duſt, he will take care of that duſt, and loſe nothing of you, but raiſe you up at the laſt day, and make your vile

vile bodies like unto his glorious body; and ſo ſhall ye be ever with the Lord.—He hath a reſpect to you, ſuch a reſpect, that he puts honour upon you; "Since thou waſt precious in my ſight, thou haſt been honourable." He hath made you kings and prieſts to your God.—Jacob was crowned a prince on the field of battle, the field of prayer, when he wreſtled with the Angel and prevailed as a prince. The poor wreſtling man is a prince, and the poor wreſtling woman a princeſs, in God's ſight; "This is the honour of all the ſaints." They have power with God, therefore no wonder that they have power over the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron; they judge and torment them that dwell on the earth, even here: And know you not, that hereafter the ſaints ſhall judge the world? God hath a reſpect to you, and he will ſhew it in due time; becauſe he hath a reſpect to the covenant, and filled your heart with a reſpect to it alſo.

4. Hence ſee the duty incumbent upon us in pleading with God for his favour, preſence, and bleſſing; let us go to him both in ſecret prayer, and in ſolemn approaches to his table, crying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the Covenant.* I know not a caſe you can be in but the covenant exhibites a cure, and you are allowed to plead it, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. After many new-covenant promiſes, it is ſaid, "For this will I be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them:" and how are we to enquire, but by pleading the reſpect he hath to the covenant.—Have you a polluted heart with the filth of ſin, a polluted conſcience with the guilt of ſin? Why, here is an article of the covenant; "I will ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you," ver. 25. O then, go to God for cleanſing, and plead, ſaying, O Lord, *Have reſpect to the Covenant.*—Have you the old hard ſtony heart ſtill within you, and would you have it renewed and ſoftened? Here is an article of the covenant, "A new heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh." O then, go to God, and plead it, ſaying, *Have reſpect to the Covenant.*—Are you deſtitute of the Spirit, ſenſual, not having the Spirit? Do you

find

find ſuch a want of the Spirit, that you cannot walk in God's way? Well, there is an article of the covenant here, ver. 27. "I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes." O plead for this great bleſſing, and ſay, Lord, *Have reſpect to the Covenant.*

In a word, when you conſider what kind of a ſinner you are, conſider alſo what kind of a covenant this is; it is enough to ſay, that it is a covenant of grace, of all ſorts of grace, for all ſorts of ſinners that are out of hell. Are you under dreadful guilt? Here is a covenant of pardoning grace, ſaying, "I will blot out thy ſin as a cloud, and thy tranſgreſſion as a thick cloud: return to me, for I have redeemed thee," Iſa. xliv. 22. O then plead he may have reſpect to the covenant.—Are you under fearful pollutions? O here is a covenant of purifying grace, ſaying, "There is a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for uncleanneſs." O then, plead he may have reſpect to the covenant.—Are you in darkneſs and ignorance, having no knowledge of God? O here is a covenant of enlightening grace, ſaying, "They ſhall be all taught of God." O then plead it, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the Covenant.*—Are you under deadneſs, and like dead and dry bones? O here is a covenant of quickening grace, ſaying, "I am come to give life, and to give it more abundantly. The hour cometh, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live." O then plead that he may have reſpect to the covenant.—Are you in confuſion, and know not what way to take? O here is a covenant of directing grace, ſaying, "I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight."—Are you under ſad plagues and foul-diſeaſes, over-run with ſores from the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot? O here is a covenant of healing grace, ſaying, "The Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe with healing in his wings.—I am the Lord that healeth thee.—I will heal your backſlidings." O then plead, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the Covenant.*—Are you in extreme danger of hell and damnation, becauſe of your ſin and guilt? O here is a covenant of delivering grace, ſaying, "Deliver his ſoul *from going down to the pit, for I have found a ranſom.*"

O then, plead it, and ſay, Lord, *Have reſpect to the Covenant.*—Are you in bondage unto ſin, Satan, and the world, a captive unto luſts, and ſhut up in unbelief as in a priſon? O here is a covenant of liberating grace! Proclaiming liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound.—Are you a ſtupid ſtoul, that cannot move toward God, nor ſtir heaven-ward, by reaſon of a backward will, like a brazen gate, that reſiſts all the force of moving means? Well, but, O! here is a covenant of drawing grace, ſaying, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.* As the power and virtue of the load-ſtone draws the iron, ſo the virtue of an exalted Chriſt draws the iron bar of the will; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* O then, plead it, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the Covenant.*

What other concerns have you?—Are you concerned for your children, that they may be partakers of covenant-bleſſings, and ſaved of the Lord? O here is a covenant of extenſive grace, intailing bleſſings on us and our offspring, ſaying, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed." O then, look to God in behalf of your children, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*—Are you concerned for the church, and the dangerous circumſtances ſhe is into by reaſon of cruel enemies? This ſeems to be the great concern of the pſalmiſt here, as appears from the body of the pſalm, and the words following the text: "For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." Theſe that live in the darkneſs of ignorance and error, and in the works of darkneſs, are full of cruelty againſt the church and people of God, and they are ſurrounded with them, in ſo much that the church is like a lily among thorns, or a ſheep among wolves; What ſhall become of it? Why, here is a covenant of defence, and of defending and protecting grace, ſaying, "Upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence;" therefore, even when enemies break down the carved work with axes and hammers, ver. 6.; when they are caſting fire into the ſanctuary, ver. 7.; when they are ſaying, *Let us deſtroy them together*, ver. 8.: Yea, when it ſhall come to this, that a bloody ſword that is raging abroad, ſhall come over to us *, and that foreign or domeſtic

* Several foreign Powers, at this time, were at open war with one another.

enemies, or both, ſhall devour and deſtroy, and, perhaps, burn up all the ſynagogues of God in the land, as it is, ver. 8.; and when we ſhall not ſee our ſigns, and there is no more any prophet, nor any among us that know the time how long, ver. 9. In all ſuch caſes, what courſe ſhall we take, but that of the pſalmiſt here? Lord, *Have reſpect unto the covenant.*

Are you concerned about inward enemies, ſpiritual enemies, and moleſted with the powers of darkneſs? Is your heart full of the habitations of cruelty, and fearfully inhabited with cruel devils, cruel luſts, cruel corruptions that maſter and conquer, and prevail againſt you, ſo as you ly many a time wounded and dead at the enemy's feet? O here is a covenant of ſin-conquering grace, not only a covenant of mercy to your ſoul, but of vengeance to your luſts, ſaying, "The day of vengeance is in mine heart, the year of my redeemed is come," Iſa. lxiii. 4. O then, implore the promiſed vengeance on all your cruel ſoul-enemies, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*

Are you concerned about your ſoul-poverty and indigency, not only as oppreſſed with enemies without and within, but oppreſſed with wants and neceſſities, being abſolutely poor and needy, and deſtitute of all good? O here is a covenant of ſoul-ſupplying grace, and of all needful proviſion, ſaying, "When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forſake them; I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground." O then, plead the covenant, as the pſalmiſt here in the following verſe, "O let not the oppreſſed return aſhamed: let the poor and needy praiſe thy name." *Have reſpect unto the covenant.*

In a word, let your caſe be the worſt caſe out of hell, this covenant contains all ſalvation, as a covenant of grace; of all grace, of all ſorts of grace, for all ſorts of ſinners, and of all ſorts of cures for all ſorts of caſes; and if you can get yourſelf wrapt within the bond of this cove-

and, as formerly obſerved, Vol. III. p. 497, our own nation was alarmed with an open rupture with the court of Spain; who, as was then confidently affirmed, had entered into a formidable alliance with different Powers, in order to recover Gibralter and Port-mahon: and to favour their deſigns the better, gave out, that their intention was to invade Britain, and place the Pretender on the throne.—However, this rupture did not actually take place, till the year 1739. *nor the attempt to inthrone* the Pretender, till the year 1745.

nant, by believing and pleading it; then you draw God upon your intereſt, ſo that your concern is his concern, your intereſt is his intereſt, your cauſe is his cauſe, as the pſalmiſt ſhews here, ver. 22. "Ariſe, O God, plead thine own cauſe." It ſtands upon his honour, and he will do his own work in his own time. If ever you got grace to draw a bill upon God, as a covenant-promiſing God in Chriſt, and have any bills lying tabled before the throne, and are ſometimes unable to plead and purſue the bill, with a Lord, *Have reſpect unto the Covenant:* you have the ſtrongeſt encouragement to wait on him, and expect his anſwering the bill in due time; for he will rather work marvellouſly, and create new worlds, rather turn all things to nothing, than quit his concern in, or give up with his reſpect unto the covenant.

Are you concerned for the advancement of the kingdom of Chriſt in the earth as you ought to be? Here is a covenant of grace to the Jews, and grace to the Gentiles; grace to the heathen nations, ſaying, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion."—Are you concerned about generations to come, about the riſing generation, when there is little hope of the preſent? O! here is a covenant of grace to ſucceeding generations till the end of the world, ſaying, "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the people ſhall praiſe thee for ever and ever."

Are you concerned about your latter-end, and how it ſhall fare with you when in the ſwellings of Jordan, how you will fight the laſt battle? O here is a covenant of death-conquering grace, ſaying, "Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory: O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy deſtruction!"—Are you concerned about a goſpel-miniſtry, and thoughtful whether it ſhall be continued? There is many a word in this covenant about it; but eſpecially that, Chriſt is exalted to maintain and ſupport a goſpel-diſpenſation to the end of the world Mat. xxviii. 20. Whatever ſpot of the earth he chuſes or refuſes, he having aſcended on high, hath received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them, Pſalm lxviii. 18.

SERMON

SERMON LXXXVII.

FAITH'S PLEA upon GOD'S WORD *.

2 Sam. vii. 25.

—Do as thou haſt ſaid.

DAVID was a ſtrong believer; and it were our great advantage to follow him in his faith: and in this word that I fix upon to ſpeak to, there are two ways wherein his faith works, 1. By believing the divine word, Thou haſt ſaid ſo and ſo. 2. By pleading the accompliſhment thereof, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

1. Faith works by believing his word, *Thou haſt ſaid.* The object and ground of faith is the divine ſaying; and faith reſts upon a Thus ſaith the *Lord;* it is not upon a Thus ſaith a *man*, or Thus ſaith a *miniſter;* nay, nor Thus ſaith an *angel.* Divine faith can ſtand only upon a divine teſtimony; "Thus ſaith the Lord; thou haſt ſaid." If you have faith then, you have received the word, not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God, which effectually works in you that believe. Faith acts by taking God's word, "Thou haſt ſaid; thou haſt promiſed; thou haſt ſpoken in thy holineſs."

2. Faith acts by pleading the accompliſhment of the promiſe, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.* God is not a ſpeaker only, but a doer; he is not a promiſer only, but a performer: and faith looks to a promiſing God, that he may be a performing God; and ſo puts him to his word.

* This was an evening-exerciſe on a preparation-day, before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Burntiſland, in the year 1733.

Observ.

OBSERV. That it is the buſineſs of true faith, to take God's word, and to put him to it.

In the illuſtration of this doctrinal propoſition, we would incline, through divine aid, to eſſay briefly the following things.

I. To ſhew, that it is the buſineſs of faith to take God's word.

II. That it is the buſineſs of faith to put him to his word.

III. How faith takes God's word.

IV. How it pleads the accompliſhment of the promiſe.

V. Whence is this the buſineſs of faith to take God at his word, and to put him to his word.

VI. Make application of the whole.

I. We are firſt to ſhew, That it is the buſineſs of faith to *take* God's word, or to take him at his word: this is plain, becauſe the word is the immediate object of faith. We have no other glaſs wherein to ſee God ſavingly, but his word, particularly his word of grace and promiſe, Rom. x. 8. "Say not, Who ſhall aſcend to heaven? that is, to bring Chriſt down from above; or, Who ſhall deſcend into the deep? that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart: ſo then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." FAITH is a relative word, it relates to the faithfulneſs of the ſpeaker; believing relates to a word to be believed. That it is the buſineſs of faith to truſt in the word of God, is evident from the whole ſcripture. How many times, Pſal. cxix. doth the pſalmiſt ſpeak of truſting in his word, and hoping in his word, and rejoicing in his word, and ſo taking him at his word?

II. We come, in the next place, to ſhew, That it is the buſineſs of faith to put him to his word, or to plead the accompliſhment of his word, that he would do as he had ſaid: this is evident from Pſal. cxix. 49. "Remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope." And how many times doth he plead with God, to do to him according to his word? "Quick-

en

en me according to thy word," ver. 25. Again and again we have this repeated, as ver. 107. 154. "Strengthen me, according to thy word; ver. 28. Save me, according to thy word, ver. 41. Be merciful to me, according to thy word, ver. 58. Deal well with thy ſervant, according to thy word, ver. 56. Let thy merciful kindneſs be my comfort, according to thy word, ver. 76. Uphold me, according to thy word, ver. 116. Give me underſtanding, according to thy word, ver. 169. Deliver me, according to thy word," ver. 170.—All comes to this, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

III. We proceed now to ſhew, How, or in what manner, faith takes the word of God.

1. It takes it by an intelligent apprehenſion of it in the underſtanding. The man is taught of God, and gets his eyes opened, to ſee the faithful ſaying and worthy of all acceptation; he ſees it to be the word of God, and a word ſpoken in ſeaſon to his weary ſoul. They will never take the word by faith that do not underſtand it; Philip ſaid to the Eunuch, *Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?* So we may ſay, Underſtandeſt thou what thou heareſt? Are your eyes opened to ſee the wonders of his law or doctrine; to ſee the glory of Chriſt held out to you in the word?

2. Faith takes the word of God by a particular application of it with the heart; inſomuch that it is a cordial apprehenſion, a cordial aſſent that is given to the word; *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs.* Saving light goes to the heart. Many have only their heads enlightened, their judgments informed, but not their hearts engaged, nor their affections captivated. Faith is a cordial applying the word, and that particularly to the man's own benefit; whether we call it aſſurance or not, it comes to the ſame thing: as when in conviction the threatening is applied, the man trembles under the fear of hell and wrath, becauſe he applies the law-threatening to himſelf, ſaying, I am the man to whom this threatening is ſpoken: ſo, in the day of converſion, or believing, the promiſe is applied, the man is relieved with the view of the grace and mercy of God in Chriſt,

be-

becauſe he applies the goſpel-promiſe to himſelf, ſaying, "I am the man to whom this promiſe is ſpoken, and I "receive and reſt upon Chriſt for ſalvation, as he is "promiſed or offered to me in this goſpel; *To me is this* "*word of ſalvation.*" And if the man did not take it to himſelf, there would be no end of believing at all. But then,

IV. The fourth thing propoſed, was, To ſhew how faith pleads the accompliſhment of the promiſe.

1. It pleads upon the mercy that made the promiſe, that it is everlaſting mercy, unchangeable mercy; "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious."

2. It pleads upon the truth that is to make out the promiſe; it is called, "The truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham," Mic. vii. 20.; that his name is faithful and true.

3. It pleads upon the power of the promiſer, "Being fully perſuaded, that he that hath promiſed is able to perform;" that he hath not out-promiſed his own promiſe, or ſaid what he cannot do.

4. It pleads upon the blood of the covenant that ſeals all the promiſes thereof; hence they are all Yea and Amen in Chriſt Jeſus.

5. It pleads upon the love of God to Chriſt; this is to pray in his name, that God, for the love he bears to Chriſt, would do as he hath ſaid.

6. It pleads upon the unchangeableneſs of God and of his word; that his word endures for ever, and that he is God, and changes not, therefore the ſons of Jacob are not conſumed.

7. In a word, it pleads upon his oath, Heb. vi. 10. "God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe, the immutability of his counſel, hath confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the help ſet before us."

8. And laſtly, it pleads upon his name; "What wilt thou not do for thy great name?"

V. The

V. The fifth thing propoſed was, To ſhew whence is this the buſineſs of faith to take God at his word, and to put him to his word. Why, becauſe,

1. It is the end and deſign of God, in giving his word; "Theſe things are written, (and ſpoken,) that we may believe in the Son of God, and that believing, we might have life in his name," John xx. 31. The goſpel is preached in vain, if men do not take God at his word, and then hang upon it.

2. Becauſe thus we glorify God; and the more we reſt upon the divine word, the more we glorify him; "Abraham was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God." We give him the honour of his truth, and other perfections this way.

3. Becauſe thus we engage the honour of God upon our ſide, when we put him to his word; his honour is engaged, "He cannot deny himſelf."

4. Becauſe faith hath no other way of living, but upon the word of God; "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Thy word was found of me, and I did eat it. This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word hath quickened me."

VI. The laſt thing propoſed was the application of the ſubject, which, indeed, was the principal thing intended. Here is a fit exerciſe before the ſolemn communion-work, to go to God and ſay, O *do as thou haſt ſaid.* Conſider what he hath ſaid, and take him at his word, and put him to it, that he would do to you accordingly. Whatever your caſe be, ſurely there is ſome word relative to it.

Some may be thinking, alas! God hath ſaid nothing to me, that I may put him to his word. Why, man, if the goſpel, that is in this Bible, be preached to you, and if there be any word of grace therein ſuitable to your caſe, then put not away the word from you, but take it, and plead upon it, that God would do as he hath ſaid. If you can ſee any word of promiſe ſuited to your caſe, and to your need, then put to your hand by faith, and lay hold upon his word.

Oh!

Oh! ſay you, is there any word from God about my caſe, who am a poor needy creature, like to ſtarve for want of a ſpiritual meal and a hearty draught of the living waters that go out from Jeruſalem? What hath God ſaid, or hath he ſaid any thing concerning me? Yea, he hath ſaid, Iſa. xli. 17, 18. "When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Iſrael, will not forſake them. I will open rivers in dry places, and fountains in the midſt of the valleys. I will make the wilderneſs a pool of water, and the dry lands ſprings of water." Hath he ſaid ſo? Then take him at his word, and put him to it, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Oh! but is there any word from God for me, who have been long waiting about ordinances, and never yet ſeen his glory, as I would deſire to ſee it? What hath he ſaid concerning me? Why, he hath ſaid, that he waits that he may be gracious; that he is a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him, Iſa. xxx. 18. He hath ſaid, "The viſion is for an appointed time, but at the end it will ſpeak, and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, and not tarry," Hab. ii. 3. Hath he ſaid ſo? Then take him at his word, and put him to it, ſaying, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word from God, concerning my caſe, that find my conſcience challenging me for prodigious guilt; there was never ſuch a guilty perſon on the face of the earth? Are you groaning under guilt? Hear what he ſays, Heb. viii. 12. "I will be merciful to your unrighteouſneſs, and your ſins and iniquities will I remember no more. Iſa. xliii. 25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins."—O then! take hold of his word, wherein he proclaims indemnity, and put him to it, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But, ſays another, is there any word from God concerning me, that am compaſſed about with ſuch ſtrong corruptions, and conquering luſts, that ſin gets the maſtery of me? Would you be delivered? Hear what he ſays, Mic. vii. 19. "He will ſubdue our iniquities, and *caſt* all our ſins into the depths of the ſea. Rom. vi. 14.

Sin

Sin ſhall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law but under grace. Iſa. lxiii. 4. The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my Redeemed is come."—Hath he promiſed to take vengeance on your luſts? Then take him at his word, ſaying, O *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word to me, that am ſuch a filthy monſter, ſuch a polluted creature in heart and way, that am ſinking, as it were, in the grave of ſin? He hath ſaid, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "From all your filthineſs and from all your idols will I cleanſe you. Zech. xiii. 1. There is a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for uncleanneſs." Is there a promiſe of cleanſing? Then take him at his word and cry, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word to me a backſlider, a grievous revolter, that many times after vows have made inquiry? my promiſes and reſolutions have been but paper-walls before the fire of temptation? Are you afflicted with this and would have relief? Behold, he ſays, Jer. iii. 22. "Return ye backſliding children, and I will heal your backſlidings. Hoſ. xiv. 4. I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely. I will be as the dew to Iſrael."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then let your heart ſay, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid?*

But what doth God ſay to me, that have no ſtrength for any duty or difficulty, that am weak like water? Would you have relief in this caſe? God ſays, 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee, and my ſtrength ſhall be made perfect in thy weakneſs. Iſa. xl. 26. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaſeth ſtrength."—Doth he ſay ſo? Then put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word concerning me, that am brought to a great difficulty, and know not what to do, or what hand to turn me to: I am ſtraitened what courſe to take? doth God ſay any thing to me? Yea, he doth: Iſa. xlii. 19. "I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in a path that they have not known. I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight. Iſa. xxx. 22. Thine ears ſhall hear a voice behind thee, ſay-

ſaying, This is the way, walk ye in it. I will guide thee by my counſel."—Doth he ſay ſo? Then put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But what ſays God to a poor ſoul that is haraſſed with the temptations of the devil, and ready to be deſtroyed with the fiery darts of the wicked one? God ſays, "I will bruiſe the head of the ſerpent. Rom. xvi. 20. The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly. For this cauſe was the Son of God manifeſted, to deſtroy the works of the devil."—Hath he begun to deſtroy him, and hath he ſaid, Thou ſhalt bruiſe him under thy feet? Then put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Alas! but what ſays God to a poor deſtitute creature, and hath nothing, no good, no grace, no light, no life, no ſtrength? He ſays, Phil. iv. 19. "My God ſhall ſupply all your wants, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus. Pſal. ix. 18. The needy ſhall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever. There is bread enough, and to ſpare, in your Father's houſe."—Hath he ſaid ſo? O then! put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But what ſays God to me, that am longing, earneſtly longing for ſome taſte of his goodneſs, ſome communion and fellowſhip with him? Why, God ſays to you, that he will ſatisfy the longing ſoul, and fill the hungry with good things. Mat. v. 6. "Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled." Hath he ſaid ſo? Then let your heart ſay, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Oh! but is there any word for one that hath a quite other caſe to tell you of, that hath no longing deſire, no hunger, no thirſt, that hath as much need as any longing ſoul here; but I have no ſpiritual longing, not ſo much as a deſire, but, like the parching earth, the dry ground, that can have no active thirſt, but hath many a wide cleft? God ſays, Iſa. xliv. 3, 4. "I will pour water on him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground; even my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offſpring. They ſhall grow up as among the graſs, as willows by the water-courſes."—Have you no other thirſt, but

but like that of the dry ground, and hath he promiſed a flood? Then, O put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Oh! but is there any word for me, that am like the barren ground and unfruitful, that bears nothing but briars and thorns, and I find this ground is rejected, as nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned? Is this your fear and concern? Hear that word, Iſa. lv. 13. "Inſtead of the thorn ſhall come up the fir-tree; and inſtead of the briar, the myrtle-tree; and it ſhall be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlaſting ſign that ſhall not be cut off." Hoſ. xiv. 8. "I am like a green fir-tree, from me is thy fruit found."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then put him to his word, ſay, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Alas! but is there any word for me, that have been a fool, a mocker, a ſcorner, that have laughed at all religion and godlineſs; is there any merciful word that I may take hold of? Yea, God ſays, Prov. i. 22. "Ye ſcorners, that delight in ſcorning, and fools, that hate knowledge, turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my word unto you."—Doth he ſay ſo? Then put him to his word, ſaying, O Do *as thou haſt ſaid.*

But what ſays God to one that hath a plagued heart, a hard heart, a baſe heart, full of all manner of evils, and all the plagues of hell? Why, God ſays, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "A new heart will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you; I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes." And whatever be the plague, he hath ſaid, "I am the Lord that healeth thee."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, Do *as thou haſt ſaid.*

Ah! but doth God ſay any thing to a ſtupid wretch, that not only hears you, but is no more affected than the ſtones of the wall, and that is quite dead, and can no more ſtir than a rock, and hath no more life than a dead corpſe? God ſays, and, O that he would ſay it with power, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they may live," Ezek. xxxvii.

12. "I will open your graves, and cauſe you to come out of your graves, and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and ſhall put my Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But, Oh! is there any word that God ſays concerning me, that hath forfeited God's favour, by heaping up great and inſuperable mountains betwixt him and me, that I fear he will never come over? Why, he ſays, Zech. iv. 7. "Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel thou ſhalt become a plain. He ſhall bring forth the head-ſtone with ſhouting, crying, Grace, grace unto it." He can make the mountains ſkip like rams, and the little hills like lambs."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O put him to his word, and ſay, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word for one that is filled with fear of heavy judgments coming upon the land, and upon an apoſtate-church? Yes, he ſays, Iſa. xxxii. 2. "A man ſhall be a hiding place from the ſtorm, and a covert from the tempeſt: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land." When you ſee matters running into confuſion, church-members betraying the privileges of the church, and the church of Scotland deſtroying herſelf with her own hand, not only boars out of the foreſt waſting her, and wild beaſts of the field devouring her, but enemies in the boſom of the church making themſelves famous, for lifting up axes and hammers, to break down the carved work of her doctrine, diſcipline and government *, remember the Lord hath ſaid, that, "When he builds up Zion, he will appear in his glory;" and that, "Upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence;" that, "At evening-time it ſhall be light;" that the darkeſt part of the night may uſher in the morning-ſtar of a Reformation in ſpite of hell: for I would incline gladly to hope God will not leave Scotland, though we have left him. He took infeftment by Solemn National Covenant ſix times †; and he hath had martyrs for his kingly office,

* What the Author here alludes to, is laid open, Vol. I. p. 232. Vol. II. p. 304. See alſo above, p. 298. 351. 389. 390. 419. 420.

† This was done at different periods betwixt the year 1589, and 1650.

that

that have aſſerted his royal prerogatives at the expence of their blood: therefore, let us apply that word, "He will ariſe and have mercy on Zion."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O take him at his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word for a poor creature that is in bondage through fear of death?—"If I have run with the footmen, and they have wearied me; then, how can I contend with horſes? And if, in the land of peace, wherein I truſted, they wearied me; then, what will I do in the ſwelling of Jordan?" I tremble to meet with the king of terrors. Why, he hath ſaid, Hoſ. xiii. 14. "I will ranſom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy deſtruction. Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory." Plead then, that he would do as he hath ſaid.

But I want aſſurance of all theſe things, may one ſay. Well, what mean you by that, man, woman, that you want aſſurance? I ſuppoſe many do not underſtand themſelves, when they ſay they want aſſurance; for, what better aſſurance would you have than the word of God? If you have his word, and take his word, you need no better aſſurance. If a man of credit, whom you can depend upon, give you his word for ſuch a thing, then you depend upon it, and ſay you are aſſured of it; for you have his word. There is an aſſurance of ſenſe, that is, the aſſurance of the work, when you have got the thing that is promiſed; this is not properly aſſurance, it is enjoyment: but the aſſurance of faith is the aſſurance of a word. And though the aſſurance of ſenſe be ſweeteſt, yet the aſſurance of faith is the ſureſt aſſurance: for, what you get in hand from God you may ſoon loſe the benefit and comfort of it; but what you have upon bond in the promiſe, is ſtill ſecure. If you take God's promiſe, you have the beſt aſſurance in the world: but if you ſay you want faith, you cannot take his word, or truſt his word, then this is plain dealing; I fear this indeed be the caſe of the moſt: then you want aſſurance indeed, becauſe you want faith, and cannot take his

word, nor give him ſo much credit. But if any be ſaying, that is indeed my caſe; I cannot believe his word: doth God ſay nothing to me? Is there any word ſuited to my caſe? Yes, there are promiſes of faith as well as to it; Zeph. iii. 12. "I will leave in the midſt of them a poor and afflicted people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord. In him ſhall the Gentiles truſt."—Hath the Author of faith ſo promiſed? Then, O take him at his word; cry for faith, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But may one ſay, I would deſire not only to have the word, but the accompliſhment of the word; I would not only have the promiſe, but the performance; and there are ſome promiſes I have been looking to, ſome ten or twenty-years old promiſes, that I think I got the faith of; but, alas! the accompliſhment is not yet come; there are ſome prayers and petitions I have had long tabled upon the ground of the promiſe: What doth God ſay to one that hath never got theſe promiſes accompliſhed, nor theſe prayers anſwered? Why, man, be thankful, if you have got grace to believe the promiſe; for ſo much faith as you have to take God's word, ſo much aſſurance you have that the word will be made out. If you be waiting upon a promiſing God, give him his time, and behold the womb of the promiſe will ſhortly open and bring forth; for it will not travail beyond its time; "Bleſſed is ſhe that believed; for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things that were told her from the Lord," Luke i. 45. And your fits and ſtarts of unbelief, O believer, ſhall not hinder the performance of the promiſe you have once believed ſavingly; "If we believe not, he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himſelf," 2 Tim. ii. 13. Will he deny his word, will he deny his oath? No, no; he will have reſpect to his covenant; becauſe he hath a reſpect to himſelf.

But what ſays God of one that is afflicted, and mourning for the deſolations of Zion, and particularly for the ſins and defections of the day we live in? I will tell you what he ſays, *They that ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy;* and tho' you have your mourning time for Zion, you ſhall alſo have your rejoicing times; "Rejoice ye with Jeruſalem,

lem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her," Iſa. lxvi. 10. He ſays, that he will ſet a mark upon the foreheads of them that ſigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midſt thereof, Ezek. ix. 4. "Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted," Mat. v. 4.—Why, then, look to him to do as he hath ſaid.

But, ſays another, I am one that has a family, and children that the Lord hath given me, and it is my concern, not only that I may be bleſſed myſelf, but that my ſeed and offspring may be bleſſed; is there any word for me in this caſe? Yea, what think you of that word? Iſa. xliv. 3. "I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring." What think ye of that covenant made with Abraham, which you are called to lay hold upon by following his faith? Gen. xvii. 7. "I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed." You have not only the covenant of Abraham to look to, but the entail of the covenant to your poſterity to look to, Iſa. lix. 21. "This is my covenant with them, ſaith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeeds ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." He hath ſaid, that children are his heritage, Pſalm cxxvii. 3.; and that his righteouſneſs is unto childrens children, Pſalm ciii. 17. "The promiſe is unto you and to your children?" Acts ii. 39. O take him at his word, and cry, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But what do you ſay to one that finds himſelf deſerted of God, and that God anſwers neither by URIM nor THUMMIM. "I go forward, but he is not there; backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left-hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himſelf on the right-hand, that I cannot ſee him, Job xxiii. 8, 9. The Comforter, that ſhould relieve my ſoul, is far removed," Lam. i. 16. God ſays, Iſa. liv. 7, 8. 10. "For a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but with everlaſting kindneſs will I draw thee, ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains

ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O take him at his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But what doth God ſay to one that is toſſed with one wave of affliction upon the back of another, "Deep calling unto deep, at the noiſe of God's water-ſpouts; all his waves and billows are gone over me?" Pſal. xlii. 7. Why, God ſays, Iſa. liv. 11, 12, 13, 14. "O thou afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy ſtones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with ſapphires: And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleaſant ſtones: And all thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord, and great ſhall be the peace of thy children: In righteouſneſs ſhalt thou be eſtabliſhed." Yea he ſays, Pſalm xci. 15. "He ſhall call upon me, and I will anſwer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him." Many ſuch ſweet words of grace he ſpeaks. O then, take his word, and plead, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word to one that is loſt in the wilderneſs, and knows not where he is, ſo as to think it impoſſible that miniſters can find him out? I think I am loſt in a thicket, and it is impoſſible to find out my caſe in your preaching, it is a matchleſs caſe, a nameleſs caſe. Why, may be that word concerns you, Iſa. lxii. 11. "Behold thy ſalvation cometh; and thou ſhalt be called, Sought out, not forſaken?" And Hoſ. ii. 14. "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs, and there will I ſpeak comfortably to her;" or, as the word is in the margin, "Speak to her *heart.*" O comfortable, when God ſpeaks not only to the ear, but to the heart! Well, hath he ſaid it? O then, take his word and plead, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word to one that hath been incorrigible under directing providences, and hath his corruptions irritate by the croſs, and rebellion rather increaſed by rods, inſtead of being reclaimed by word and rod? Is there any caſe like mine, or is there any word for me to lay hold upon? Yes; what think you of that word,

Iſa.

Iſa. lvii. 17, 18. "For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart?" Well, what follows? "I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners." O aſtoniſhing wonder of free grace! that it was not ſaid, 'I have ſeen his ways, and will damn him;' but, "I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him:" I have ſeen his ways, and will ſave him."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then put in your petition, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word to ſuch as are under the power of unbelief and impenitency? The goſpel is preached to believers and penitents: O God forbid but it was not preached to ſinners, that are both unbelieving and impenitent, in order to bring them to faith and repentance: why, what ſays God to ſuch? He ſays, what they ought to lay hold and plead upon, Pſalm cx. 3. "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power." Acts v. 31. "Chriſt is exalted at the right-hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſin." Plead then he may do as he has ſaid.

But is it poſſible that God is ſpeaking to any that hath been a notorious ſinner? Perhaps, all the country knows that I have been a ſcandalous debauchee, a leud and wicked ſinner, a profane, graceleſs wretch. O! if any were charmed with the joyful ſound of goſpel grace to-day, he ſays, Iſa. i. 8. "Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow: though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool." Tho' you have ſinned to the uttermoſt, I am able to ſave to the uttermoſt; is your name wonderful, as a ſinner? Behold his name is Wonderful, as a Saviour.—O hath he ſaid ſo? Well, go and plead his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But beſides my wickedneſs, I am groſly ignorant; doth God ſay any thing to a poor brutiſh, ignorant creature, like me? Would you be taught? There is a word you may take hold of, John vi. 45. "It is written in the prophets, They ſhall be all taught of God." And, "Who teaches like him?"—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then take him at his word, ſaying, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word from God for one that hath crucified ſo many convictions as I have done; yea, and virtually crucified the Son of God afreſh, by rejecting his calls, grieving his Spirit? Yea, we are called to preach the goſpel to every creature, and even to the crucifiers of Chriſt: Repentance and remiſſion of ſin muſt be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem, Luke xxiv. 47. Why beginning at Jeruſalem, among the crucifiers of Chriſt? Becauſe they have moſt need of his blood to waſh them: Chriſt came to ſave ſinners, the chief of ſinners.—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then put in your bill, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But will you tell me, Is there any word for one that cannot think that it is as you are ſaying, that there is any merciful word in God's mouth, or any merciful thought in God's heart towards me; it cannot enter into my thought; I cannot let it light in my mind or heart? Why, God ſays, Iſa. lv. 8, 9. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." You are not to meaſure his thoughts by yours, no more than you can meaſure theſe wide heavens with your arms: but God knows his own thoughts, and what ſays he of them? Jer. xxix. 11, 12, 13. "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, ſaith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye ſhall ſeek me and find me, when you ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart."—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then go and plead his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

In a word, Do you want his preſence? He hath ſaid, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world: I will never leave thee nor forſake thee." Are you afraid of hell and damnation? He hath ſaid, "Deliver his ſoul from going down to the pit, I have found out a ranſom."—O what encouragement is here to go and pray and plead, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid?*

O Sirs, ſearch the ſcriptures, and ſtudy the word of God; conſult and conſider what he hath ſaid; let there be

be no mouldy Bibles among you; let not the duſt of your Bibles witneſs againſt you, for your eternal ſalvation depends upon your believing what he hath ſaid, therefore ſtudy the faith of what he hath ſaid. The Spirit is promiſed, and the ſcriptures are written to work this faith; Chriſt is exalted, and the throne of grace is erected to give this faith; and this faith comes by hearing what he hath ſaid: by hearing not what Plato hath ſaid, or Seneca hath ſaid; what this or that man hath ſaid, but what God hath ſaid in his word, in this Bible, which is a book ſo prefaced, and ſo atteſted as never any other book was: the Old Teſtament is prefaced by all the miracles wrought by Moſes; the New Teſtament was prefaced by all the miracles wrought by Chriſt. And as Moſes's miracles were wrought before the Old Teſtament was written, ſo Chriſt's miracles were wrought before the New Teſtament was written: never a book was ſo atteſted as this, even by a cloud of witneſſes, a cloud of miracles, a cloud of martyrs, who ſealed with their blood the truth contained in it. God, in the New Teſtament, exactly fulfils what he hath ſaid in the Old; yea, the preſent ſtate of all the world is a viſible performing of ſcripture-prophecies.—Are not the Jews at this day a ſcattered and deſpiſed people, as the ſcripture ſaid they ſhould be? Hath not God done as he hath ſaid?—Is not Antichriſt, the long-lived man of ſin and the cruel man of blood, as the ſcripture told he ſhould be? Thus it is done as he hath ſaid.—Are not the Pagan parts of the earth the dark places and habitations of cruelty, as the ſcripture ſays they ſhould be? Thus it is as he hath ſaid.—Do not the ſeven churches of Aſia ly deſolate, as they were threatened, unleſs they repented? Thus it is as he hath ſaid.—Is not Mahomet, the falſe prophet, and his followers like the waters of the great river Euphrates, to which they are compared in ſcripture? And thus it is as he hath ſaid.—Does not the whole world ly in wickedneſs, as the word of God ſhews? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Is not every ſaint as a brand plucked out of the burning, as the ſcripture ſpeaks? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Are not Deiſts and ſcoffers walking after their own luſts, and ridiculing

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the promiſe of Chriſt's coming, as the ſcripture ſpeaks? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Are not the black marks of perilous times in the laſt days upon us, as the ſcripture ſpeaks? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Are not the fooliſh virgins as many, yea, and more than the wiſe, and all ſlumbering and ſleeping, and all according as he hath ſaid?—Doth not the Spirit ſpeak expreſly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, and accordingly it is as he hath ſaid?—Is not the goſpel a ſavour of life to ſome, and a ſavour of death to others? Is not Chriſt precious to ſome, and a ſtone of ſtumbling and a rock of offence to others, as the ſcripture ſpeaks? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Look about you, and ſee if any thing that falls out, be not an accompliſhment of the word; and, O how ſhould you value this word! not a jot or tittle of it ſhall fall to the ground.

Walk in this garden of the ſcripture, and pluck up the flowers of goſpel promiſes, and put them in your boſom; live by faith upon the promiſe, and be perſuaded, whatever ſtands in the way, that he will do as he hath ſaid. He will do ſo, for what he hath ſaid he hath written, what he hath ſaid he hath ſealed, what he hath ſaid he hath ſworn, what he hath ſaid he will never unſay; therefore, take hold of his word of grace, and hold him at his word in life and death, ſaying, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

SERMON

SERMON LXXXVIII.

THE SAINT'S DUTY IN EVIL TIMES *.

ISA. xxvi. 8.

Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee.—

GOD hath promiſed his people a door of hope, in the valley of Achor, that they may ſing there. Theſe words are part of a ſong, compoſed a little before the captivity, by way of anticipation, ſhewing what comfort may be found in the midſt of all afflictions. The firſt part of the ſong is of a high ſtrain, full of comfort: but, omitting the co-herence, in this text you may notice, 1. The circumſtances the Lord's people were in, they were under judgments. By *judgments* ſometimes in ſcripture is underſtood the law and commandment; but here it is *affliction*, as in the following verſe. 2. Whence their affliction proceeded, from GOD; *thy* judgments. 3. The variety thereof, they are judgments, in the plural number; and the *way* of his judgments. 4. The perſons who were tryſted with them, even the people of God, that are here repreſenting their caſe, *we*. 5. To whom they relate their circumſtances, to God himſelf; *In the way of thy judgments*, O LORD. 6. Their exerciſe; we have *waited* for thee.

From which I obſerve ſo many doctrines, for ground of meditation.

* Where or on what occaſion this ſermon was preached, is uncertain; but by the place it has in the Author's notes, it is probable it was ſome time in the year 1733.

I. From

I. From the afflictions they were under, being called judgments. Obſerve, 'That on whomſoever God inflicts any puniſhments, they are always juſt; for they are judgments, parts of his righteous adminiſtrations, as the righteous Judge of all the earth.' Hence learn,

1. To juſtify God, whatever be the affliction you are tryſted with; and to aſcribe righteouſneſs and holineſs to him: thus did David, when God had forſaken him and refuſed him an audience; Pſal. xxii. 1, 2, 3. "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou heareſt not; and in the night ſeaſon, and am not ſilent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabiteſt the praiſes of Iſrael." So ſhould we ſay, 'I am ſo and ſo afflicted; but thou art 'holy, but thou art righteous, but thou art juſt.'

2. To condemn ourſelves when God ſo righteouſly judgeth us. We ought not to charge God fooliſhly; but to take with the charge of ſin, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe we have ſinned againſt him.

3. To ſee ſin to be an iniquity and an unjuſt thing, becauſe his afflicting for ſin is juſt; "Thou art juſt when thou ſmiteſt, and clear when thou judgeſt."

4. To receive affliction dutifully and humbly; becauſe we receive good things out of the hand of God, and ſhould bleſs him becauſe he is merciful; therefore, we ſhould receive evil things out of his hand alſo, and adore him, becauſe he is juſt. He may afflict in ſovereignty: but if he marks iniquity, we need quarrel no puniſhment he inflicts.

II. OBSERV. 'That judgments upon a people do not come by chance; but have their original commiſſion from God: therefore, they are called *his* judgments, *thy* judgments."

The evil of ſin is ours; but the evil of affliction the Lord challenges as his; "Is there evil in the city, and the LORD hath not done it?" It is God that chaſtiſeth. Who brought ſuch a man to a ſick-bed, and who inflicted ſuch and ſuch a trouble? Who made that man a widower,

dower, and his children motherleſs; and ſuch a woman a widow, and her children fatherleſs? Why, ſaith God, Am not I the Author of it? It is I that removes comforts; I that inflicts croſſes. The crueleſt act that ever was done in the world, ſo far as concerned the afflictive part of it, is what God challenges as his own deed, *viz.* the delivering of Chriſt to be crucified. It was not the hand of Pilate, but the hand of God himſelf: ſo it is ſaid when Pilate ſpoke to Chriſt, ſaying, "Knoweſt thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to releaſe thee? Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater ſin, John xix. 10, 11. Ye men of Iſrael hear theſe words, Jeſus of Nazareth a man approven of God among you, by miracles, wonders and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye yourſelves alſo know. Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain," Acts ii. 22, 23. Whatever be the ſecond cauſe, God is the firſt mover and the ſpring. Hence learn,

1. To take off your eyes and paſſions from inſtruments of trouble, and from the ſtone that is thrown, and look to the hand that throws it. See God in every affliction; it is his judgment, whether fatherly or wrathful.

2. Learn to exerciſe ſubmiſſion, patience and toleration. If it were only the hand of man, and the mere influence of ſome temporary cauſe, then perhaps there might be ſome liberty taken; but it is God: therefore, let this ſtop our mouth for ever; "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; becauſe thou didſt it," Pſal. xxxix. 9.

3. This ſhould influence not only to toleration, but to ſupplication to God; "Is any afflicted? let him pray:" pray for grace to bear what he lays on your back: pray not only for patience, but for perſeverance, ſince it is hard to hold out under affliction; pray for dependence upon himſelf; afflictions are the baniſhers of men from creature-comforts, and from reſting on them; therefore we need to pray for a believing and cloſe adherence to the Lord himſelf; and pray for deliverance; yet with ſubmiſſion to his will.

4. Learn

4. Learn to acknowledge his wiſe providence, that by judgment, can bring about mercy: ſince they are his judgments, we may expect his mercifully accompanying them for good, and making them to work for good, to looſe the heart from the creature. *He doth not afflict willingly*, but he mercifully ordereth the affliction.

5. Learn to reap advantage by judgment, and to turn to him that ſmiteth, and to hear the rod, for it cometh with a leſſon; *Schola crucis, ſchola lucis.*

III. Observ. "That God's judgments are various; from above, from beneath, from without, from within, from this hand and that hand: hence we read here of the way of his judgments." There are diverſity of afflictions in the hand of God: ſome he exerciſeth with affliction one way, and ſome another; ſome various ways, and with various afflictions, and multitudes of them: David knew this; "Deep calleth unto deep." Temptations, deſertions, and many other ways: Paul was in perils diverſe ways. Hence learn,

1. Men ſhould beware of multiplying ſin, leſt God multiply judgments; for he hath many arrows in his quiver: an impenitent ſinner can never out-ſin God's wrath; his arrows of vengeance can never be ſpent.

2. Men little need to be ſecure when one judgment is over, as if the bitterneſs of death were paſt: God often brings a cloud after rain. When you have eſcaped one affliction, God can ſoon meet you with another; he can ſoon make a ſon riſe up againſt a father, as Abſalom againſt David. You may eſcape the famine, and may fall by the ſword; you may eſcape one trial, and yet a greater may be behind. Be not ſecure.

3. If God hath ſo many and various afflictions wherewith to afflict you, leave it to the wiſdom of God, in what kind, and after what manner he will chaſtiſe you. Beware of afflictions of your own procuring: cut not out your own troubles; let God cut and carve for you.

4. Learn hence, to ſtoop at the firſt blow, and not to put God at the charge of many arrows; he will overcome when he judgeth, as he did with Pharaoh, that haughty

haughty monarch: he had better diſmiſſed Iſrael at firſt.

IV. Observ. "That the ſins of God's own people may provoke him to ſend judgments on them, and on the place they live in." They may ſin, as here, and bring judgments upon themſelves and others: God may be provoked for the iniquity of ſons and daughters. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities." Hence learn,

1. Let not God's own children forget their obnoxiouſneſs to the diſcipline of his houſe; "If his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judgments:—Then will I viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes," Pſal. lxxxix. 30. 32.

2. Let every one examine their own heart, and ſee what hand they have in bringing ſuch a judgment, and ſuch a judgment, whether ſpiritual or temporal.

3. It ſhould teach us to ſtand in the gap when others make it wider, even the people of God themſelves: how few then are there to ſtand and to fill it up, or ſtop it, in this day of degeneracy and backſliding?

4. It ſhould teach us to bewail the ſins even of God's own people, their carnality, levity, wantonneſs, &c. and to live a life of continual dependence upon the Lord Jeſus that we be not given up to the ſway of our luſts; and to humble ourſelves. 2 Chron. vii. 4. "If my people, which are called by my name, ſhall humble themſelves and pray and ſeek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their ſins, and will heal their land." Where we may remark, that as humiliation, ſupplication, and reformation are neceſſary, in order to have a land healed, if it is hurt even by the ſins of God's people; ſo it is not our duties, or performance thereof, but God's propriety in us, and covenant with us, that cauſeth him to ſhew mercy to us. Which alſo teacheth us, how to wreſtle with God in prayer; the argument muſt be drawn from his free grace. And how to do duty acceptably; it is by faith in Chriſt; as our perſons, ſo our ſervices are accepted only in him: and his intereſt in his people is unchangeable.

V. Ob-

V. Observ. "That we cannot go to a better hand, to repreſent our afflicted circumſtances, than the hand that ſmites us; "In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, ſaith the people here, we come to pour out our complaints." Hence,

1. Here is the myſtery of faith; it brings a man to that very God that was offended; to him that judgeth righteouſly, that he may judge alſo mercifully.

2. God's people, in their greateſt trials, will never want a refuge: when they are under judgments, they make their Judge their refuge.

3. How condemnation-worthy are they that go to other phyſicians of no value, neglecting God himſelf, though it is the end of his chaſtiſements to drive them to himſelf?

4. Afflictions that come from God, with a bleſſing, leadeth to God by prayer; and when we truly ſee them to be from him, as his judgments, they will lead us to him, to breathe out our ſouls to him, as the Deliverer.

VI. Observ. "That it is the duty of the afflicted to "wait for God." It is the property of God's people to wait patiently the time of God's mercy, in a way of hope, Lam. iii. 25, 26. "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the ſoul that ſeeketh him. It is good that a man ſhould both hope and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord." It is not enough to wait on God, in the way of his mercies; but we muſt wait on him in the way of his judgments alſo. Here I would, 1. Propoſe ſome queſtions, for explaining and clearing the doctrine. 2. Reſolve ſome objections that may be made, againſt this duty of waiting upon God in the way of his judgments.

1ſt, The firſt thing was, to propoſe ſome queſtions for clearing the duty of waiting on the Lord.

Quest. 1. What are we to wait upon God for?

Answ. For all promiſed bleſſings of the new covenant: we ought to lay hold on his covenant, and then to wait for all the promiſed good thereof. As,

1. For God himſelf, his being our God, and acting the

the part of a God to us; ſince the great promiſe of the covenant is, *I will be thy God, and ye ſhall be my people.*

2. For the new heart and ſpirit, according to the promiſe, "A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and give you an heart of fleſh." For promiſed pardon; "I will be merciful to your unrighteouſneſs, your ſins and iniquities will I remember no more." For promiſed healing, according to the promiſe, "I will heal your backſlidings; I will love you freely." For the promiſed Spirit; "I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground." For promiſed preſence; "I will never leave thee nor forſake thee." For promiſed direction; "I will lead the blind in a way they know not." For promiſed ſalvation, grace and glory, and every good thing promiſed in the covenant; for what he hath promiſed to his children, to the church, to the nation. His promiſe is the rule for regulating our expectations, in waiting for God. We need to know what we are waiting for.

Quest. 2. How, and in what manner are we to wait for him?

Answ. 1. We are to wait believingly; believing and waiting are joined together, Pſalm xxvii. 13. "I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of God in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thy heart." What is this waiting but continued believing, a living by faith.

2. We are to wait on the Lord induſtriouſly, obediently, and diligently: true faith is acting and working; we are to wait in the courſe of duty and diligence; ſo Elijah, when he prayed for rain, and ſent his ſervant to ſee if there was any appearance thereof; he prayed again, and ſent again, ſeven times.

3. We are to wait humbly: waiting is drawn from the ſervice of an inferior to a ſuperior, that waits upon him reverently and reſpectfully. O the infinite diſtance between God and us! How humbly and reverently ſhould we wait upon him, as our great Lord and Maſter? Pſalm cxxiii. 1, 2.

4. We are to wait hopefully; Lam. iii. 26. "It is good

for a man both to hope, and quietly to wait for the ſalvation of God." If his mercy be free, who would not wait and hope in his mercy, however unworthy?

5. We ſhould wait upon the Lord chearfully and affectionately; "For he meeteth him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteouſneſs. Why art thou diſcouraged, O my ſoul; hope thou in God," Pſal. xlii. 5. xliii. 5. Give not way to diſcouragement and deſpondency; for thus we diſhonour God, and diſcredit his way. He loveth a chearful giver, a chearful ſeeker, a chearful waiter.

6. Wait on the Lord conſtantly and perſeveringly; Amos xii. 6. *Wait on thy God continually.* Wait at the pool, till the Angel trouble the water: wait on him all the days of your appointed time, till your change come. There is no period here but death.

QUEST. 3. When are we to wait, at what time?

ANSW. At all times, as I was ſaying juſt now; and particularly in the way of his judgments. As,

1. A time of trouble and affliction.—Affliction from God is the furnace wherein God tries his metal, tries their faith, hope, and patience; therein we are to wait for him.—Afflictions from men; ſay not in your haſte, You will repay miſchief to them that hurts you; I will have a-mends of ſuch a man. "Chriſt, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not."—Afflictions from friends, from enemies, and devils; Job met with all theſe, and waited on God in them.

2. A time of want; outward want, is a time for waiting: therefore we are called to be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and ſupplication, make our requeſts known. Hath he provided a Chriſt for your ſouls, and will he not provide a crumb for your bodies? Inward want; "When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midſt of the vallies: I will make the wilderneſs a pool of water, and the dry land ſprings of water," Iſa. xli. 17, 18.

3. A time of temptation, is a fit time for waiting on the Lord; ſo Paul, when tempted, he beſought the Lord thrice.

4. A

4. A time of deſertion; Iſa. viii. 17. "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the houſe of Jacob; and I will look for him."

5. A time of fear; Pſalm lvi. 3. "What time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee."

6. A time of weakneſs; though called to duty or warfare, wait on him for ſtrength; "They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength," Iſa. xl. 31.

7. In a word, we are to wait on him in ſecret, in private, in public, in good and bad company, in all that we go about, or are called to be employed in.

QUEST. 4. Why are we to wait for him?

ANSW. 1. We are to wait on him, becauſe he hath commanded us, Pſalm xxvii. 14. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart; wait, I ſay, on the Lord." Whatever he commands is ſurely our duty: and there is no greater reaſon, for any duty, than his ſovereign will.

2. Becauſe of his relation to us as our God, Maker, and Maſter; Pſal. cxxiii. 2. "Behold as the eyes of ſervants look unto the hands of their maſters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her miſtreſs; ſo our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us."

3. Becauſe all things wait on him; Pſalm cxlv. 15. "The eyes of all things wait upon thee, and thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon." All the inanimate creatures do ſo paſſively; we ought to do ſo actively.

4. Becauſe it is our intereſt; Iſa. xxx. 18. "Bleſſed are they that wait for him." Iſa. xl. 31. "They that wait on the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint."

2*dly*, We propoſe to reſolve ſome objections, that may be made againſt this duty of waiting on God in the way of his judgments.

[1.] Some plead againſt this duty, becauſe of their darkneſs and unclearneſs about their ſaving intereſt in the God they are called to wait upon: if I knew he was my God, I might have encouragement to wait on him; but I am in the dark about my intereſt in him, and why ſhould I wait for him?

ANSW. 1. Let it be one of your reaſons for waiting upon God, to deal with him for making your right to the covenant ſure: Pray him to ſend forth his light and truth, to be a guide to you.

2. Thy want of clearneſs, in this matter, doth not make void his call and command to thee, to wait on him. This is indeed neceſſary for the doing it more comfortably and ſucceſsfully.

3. When you cannot wait on him, as one you know to be yours, by ſpecial right; you are to wait on him as one that offers himſelf to you, and to be yours through Chriſt.

4. Let not your darkneſs be a lazy, idle darkneſs; but be ſtirred up to diligence by duty and means; and if thou art as diligent, tender, humble, and holy under thy darkneſs, as others under their light and aſſurance, it is well; and will have an agreeable iſſue.

[2.] Some plead, how can I wait on him, in the way of his judgments, when I have procured theſe judgments by my ſins? If my ſufferings were cleanly, then I could wait for God, under them; but my manifold tranſgreſſions have juſtly provoked him to ſend theſe judgments on me.

ANSW. 1. Your ſin bringing on judgments, doth not looſe your obligation to the duty of waiting upon God under them, though it may make the performance more difficult. In Pſalm cxxx. 1. there the Pſalmiſt is in the deeps, yet he cries to God; though ſin was at the door, therefore he cries alſo for forgiveneſs, ver. 3.; intimating, that ſin had brought him into the deeps.

2. Thou art the more obliged to wait upon God under his judgments, that ſin hath procured them; and that whatever way you look on this duty of waiting. (1.) If you underſtand it for ſubmiſſion to God under ſad providences, and patient abiding God's time and leiſure for relief, then your ſin is a ſtrong motive to this waiting. What better reaſon for holy ſubmiſſion to his judgments, than that we have brought them on ourſelves? And what better reaſon to wait his time, than that we, by our ſin, deſerve eternal miſery? See *Micah* vii. 7. "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait

wait for the God of my ſalvation: my God will hear me," Lam. iii. 39. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?" (2.) If you underſtand waiting for a hopeful expectation of good from God, and of promiſed covenant mercy, then the conſideration of thy ſins ought not to hinder thy waiting for this, in the way of his judgments, though thou haſt provoked him thereunto; becauſe the ground of your hope of the fulfilling of covenant-promiſes, is the free grace of God in Chriſt, who hath performed the condition of the covenant: and ſovereign grace can neither be furthered by thy good, nor hindered by thy ill; though yet ſtill good things, promiſed in the covenant, are to be expected in the way of duty, not in the way of going on in ſin; therefore, ſet about the exerciſe of repentance, judging thyſelf as Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.; and by faith apply to the fountain of the blood of Chriſt, 1 John i. 9.

3. It hath been the practice of God's children to wait upon him under judgments, even tho' they were conſcious of ſin bringing them on, Pſal. xlix. 5. "Wherefore ſhould I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels ſhall compaſs me about?" Again ſaith the church, "Tho' our iniquities teſtify againſt us, yet do thou for thy name's ſake. Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." Have we not the more reaſon to wait on him for pardoning and purifying grace, that our ſin hath brought ſad things upon us?

4. Chriſt ſympathizes with you, even in theſe afflictions which you bring upon yourſelves, by your ſin. As a King, he corrects you for your ſins, and yet as an Huſband and Head ſympathizes with you, and grieves for the miſery that, by your ſin and folly, you bring upon yourſelves, Iſa. lxiii. 9. "In all their afflictions he is afflicted;" even in theſe they ſinfully procured. See Judg. x. 15, 16. Iſrael had by their idolatry provoked God to give them up to a cruel enemy, yet it is ſaid, "His ſoul was grieved for the affliction of Iſrael." How ſhould this encourage us to wait on him, and expect his mercy?

[3.] Some plead againſt this duty in their heart, from the fearfulneſs of the providence that befals them, the

the irrecoverableneſs of their loſſes, and the ſingularity of their caſes; "Is there any ſorrow like my ſorrow?"

Answ. 1. No trouble, be it ever ſo great, hath befallen you, but what others of God's children have either met with the ſame, or with the equivalent; therefore, ſay not your caſe is ſingular, 1 Pet. iv. 12.

2. However ſingular thy affliction be, yet ſtill thou art the more obliged to this duty, as a duty ſhaped out for a ſad condition. I know no wrathful diſpenſation, a child of God can fall under, that doth not conſiſt with thoughts of peace towards them, to give them an expected end; and where it is not good for him both to hope and quietly wait for the ſalvation of God, Lam. iii. 26.

3. In waiting for God, we are to wait for what he hath promiſed, and as he hath promiſed it. Your temporal loſſes, be it of a friend, an huſband, wife, father, mother, children, &c. may indeed be irrecoverable: in many caſes you are not to expect a reſtoration of the particular thing, by the loſs whereof God corrects you: but it is ſufficient, if he gives you as good; if he gives you in gold what you have loſt in ſilver. He can make up your loſſes another way, by giving thee as good; yea, and making thee find more comfort, ſweetneſs, and ſatisfaction in himſelf, than ever thou haſt found in theſe enjoyments. Some loſſes cannot be repaired without a miracle, in the particular itſelf; and for this thou haſt no promiſe: but thou art to wait on him for the ſanctification of thy loſs, and for a ſweet up-making of it.

4. Senſe and reaſon, which go upon viſible appearances, are not the grounds of faith, nor of waiting upon God; but the covenant and promiſe is the ground thereof. Therefore, having God's word to build upon, on him you are to wait; though there be nothing appearing to ſenſe and reaſon that promiſes relief: but let faith look to what God hath ſpoken in his holineſs; and then there is ground to rejoice and to hope. Faith, which is the evidence of things not ſeen, will ſee ſalvation coming, when ſenſe cannot perceive it, but *ſeems* to ſee the quite contrary: therefore, learn to walk *by faith*, and not by ſight, 2 Cor. v. 7.

[4.] Some

[4.] Some plead, they have waited long, and are not the better, but rather tryſted with greater trouble; and therefore are ready to ſay, "Why ſhould I wait on the Lord any longer?" The longer I wait, the greater my trouble grows.

Answ. 1. It is not ſtrange though the Lord ſhould make his people wait long; yea, wait for good, and behold evil, and make greater trouble ſhoulder out the leſſer, Jer. viii. 15. "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble." Micah i. 12. "For the inhabitants of Maroth waited carefully for good; but evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jeruſalem." When the end for which affliction came is not reached, yet ſtill it is our duty to continue waiting, while he continues afflicting, Hoſ. xii. 6. "Wait on thy God continually." We are to wait on him, till the day of calamity be over-paſt; Pſalm lvii. 1. "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my ſoul truſteth in thee; yea, in the ſhadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until theſe calamities be overpaſt."

2. Whatever be the changes of divine providence, his love is unchangeable. He may multiply new troubles, inſtead of delivering from old ones; yet all this cannot ſeparate from his love, Rom. viii. 35,—38.

3. Let times of trouble be never ſo great or long, yet they are not comparable either to the eternal torments of the damned; or the eternal joys of the redeemed: the former thou haſt deſerved, the latter thou art entitled to. Why then fret, and not wait patiently on God, under thy troubles? They are nothing to the eternal miſery of the damned, from which thou art delivered; nothing to the eternal happineſs of the redeemed, to which thou haſt a right; and that will ſoon ſwallow up all ſorrow.

4. Let them be never ſo great, or of long continuance, they will have an end; "The expectation of the needy ſhall not periſh for ever," Pſalm ix. 18. See Pſalm xxxvii. 37. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all," Pſal. xxxiv. 19. "The viſion is for an appointed time," Hab. ii. 3. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me,

and

and heard my cry," Pſal. xl. 1. The Lord's time of giving out covenant-mercies, is the due time, the only time, the beſt time, the fitteſt time. Thro' haſtineſs of ſpirit you may think it is more than time, that the promiſed outgate, or promiſed mercy were given; but thou art not a competent judge, in this caſe. If we get our mercies or outgate in our time, God would loſe the glory, and we would loſe the advantage he deſigns thereby: he hath made every thing beautiful in his time, not in ours. Let nothing therefore hinder your waiting on him, in the way of his judgments. "He is a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him," Iſa. xxx. 18.

We now proceed to offer ſome directions, for the right management of this duty of waiting on the Lord in the way of his judgments.

Say you, I cannot wait for God, being of an unbelieving fretful ſpirit. What help would you offer?—

ANSW. In general, without a change of nature, by regenerating grace; and without ſtrength, by the aſſiſting grace of the Spirit, it is impoſſible this duty can be performed. Be ſenſible of this. And more particularly,

1. Labour to ſee the inſufficiency and vanity of all things beſide God; and to have a right uptaking of his ſufficiency, and graciouſneſs through Chriſt, to be forthcoming for thee in thy worſt condition: without this, a ſoul will never wait for God. While people expect relief from the creature; and from this and the other mean; and ſee not the inſufficiency of all things beſide God, and how unprofitable and unſucceſsful every courſe will prove, without him, they will never look to God and wait for him. And while people have no ſpiritual uptaking of the ſufficiency of God, for their upmaking in every condition, and of his graciouſneſs to make that ſufficiency forthcoming through Chriſt, but entertain jealous thoughts of God, they will not wait upon him: but if men had once a view of creature-inſufficiency, and of God's all-ſufficiency, and of his graciouſneſs to make it forthcoming, this would marvellouſly help to wait for him, and cry, "Aſhur ſhall not ſave us, neither will we ſay any more to the work of our hands, Ye are *our gods*," Hoſ. xiv. 3.

2. Frequently call up your ſouls to this duty, reſo-ely eſſaying it, over the belly of all obſtructions and ficulties; as in Iſa. viii. 17. Micah vii. 7. Pſal. iii. 5. ch reſolutions would put the ſoul in a waiting and tching poſture.

3. By faith bring ſtrength from Chriſt, who can eaſily power you, Phil. iv. 13.; for, "Without him we can nothing;" and bring all encouragement from the co-nant, where there are promiſes made *of* waiting, and waiting. Pſal. xxvii. 14. "Wait on the Lord and be good courage:" Object. But I cannot: why then it is led, "He will ſtrengthen thine heart." There are alſo et promiſes *to* waiting, Iſa. xl. 31. xxx. 18. lxiv. 4. But they that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ngth: they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ll run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not t.—And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may cious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of gment; bleſſed are all they that wait for him.—For e the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor ceived by the ear, neither hath the eye ſeen, O God, des thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth im. Lam. iii. 25. The Lord is good unto them that t for him, to the ſoul that ſeeketh him."

. Be much in prayer for a waiting frame, and a-ſt the diſtempers of the ſpirit that hinders it. Go tell God of your wants, and of your ills; and pray to give that patience, faith, hope, and holy ſubmiſ-, and a waiting ſpirit; "Their heart ſhall live that : God."

. Let it be a deed of the ſoul; *My ſoul doth wait*, 1 the Pſalmiſt. (1.) Let it be a knowing diſtinct deed ne ſoul; *Truly our ſoul waiteth for him*, Pſal. lxii. 1. A voluntary deed of the ſoul; not of neceſſity, but of ce, and with delight, Mic. vii. 7. "I will wait for God of my ſalvation." (3.) An earneſt deed of the ; Rom. viii. 19. "The earneſt expectation of the ture, waiteth for the manifeſtation of the ſons of ;" as the weary watch waits and longs for the mor-, Pſal. cxxx. 6. (4.) An humble deed of the ſoul.

Waiting properly takes in the diſtance that is between an inferior and ſuperior, the perſon waited on, and the perſon waiting; "As the eyes of the ſervants look to the hands of their maſters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her miſtreſs; ſo our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us," Pſalm cxxiii. 2. Conſider the great diſtance between God, your heavenly Maſter, and you. (5.) Let it be a reſolute deed like that, "I have ſworn, and I will perform."—Pſalm xxvii. 4. "One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." (6.) Let it be a fixed and conſtant deed of the ſoul, notwithſtanding of one diſappointment on the back of another, during the whole way of his judgments, "Wait on thy God continually, Hoſ. xii. 6. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried; mine eyes fail, while I wait upon thee," Pſal. lxix. 3. Wait on God in the way following the text; "The deſire of our ſoul is to thy name."

We now offer ſome Motives to enforce a compliance with the duty. 1. Conſider that God, and the good things you need, in your ſad condition, are worth the waiting for, were it never ſo long, Pſalm lxv. 5. 6, 7. "My ſoul wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my ſalvation; he is my defence; I ſhall not be moved. In God is my ſalvation and my glory: the rock of my ſtrength, and my refuge is in God." Shall a huſbandman have patience for the fruit of the earth, and wait for the former and the latter rain; and the ſoldier wait for victory; the merchant for gain, and the watch for the morning; and yet ſhall not ſouls in trouble wait for God, their Rock, their Salvation, their Refuge, *&c.*? 2. The time of God's delaying promiſed mercies and relief, is God's waiting time, as well as ours, Iſa. xxx. 18. "He waiteth that he may be gracious." He expects a ſuitable time to ſhew mercy. Thou thinkeſt thou waiteſt long for God; but truly he waits as long for thee, and for a fit ſeaſon to ſhew mercy on the ſoul that waits for him. 3. Waiting for God in trouble,

trouble, keeps from being taken away with the temptation that attends the trouble. Satan takes the time of trouble to winnow poor ſouls, with his temptations, and to drive them away from God to ſome monſtrous courſe or other, for relief: but when the ſoul is once got to a waiting poſture; they are much ſecured againſt theſe temptations. "I truſted in him, and am helped. Wait on the Lord, and he will ſtrengthen thine heart." 4. God doth all things well; and maketh all things work together for good to them that love, and wait for him, Rom. viii. 28. They ſhall all be brought to ſay, that he hath dealt well with them, according to his word. Therefore, in the way of his judgments, let us wait on him. 5. Conſider how complete he is; "Chriſt is all and in all." Conſider how deſirable he is; "He is altogether lovely." Therefore wait on him even in the way of his judgments.

We have reaſon to expect, that before good days come, there ſhall terrible days come. Why, God hath given ſuch a commiſſion as Iſaiah got, chap. vi. 10. "Go make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes: leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart and convert, and be healed." We cannot limit the Lord, nor ſpeak of his time: but ſurely the ſins of our day are greater than the ſins of thoſe in Iſaiah's time; for, we have ſinned againſt greater light, clearer goſpel-light, than ever they had. And the greater our privileges are, the greater our guilt in neglecting them: the greater our guilt, the more awful will our judgments be. Perhaps he is to ſhake the nations before the Deſire of all nations ſhall come. Believe, watch, and pray, for your enemies are living and lively: corruption is not deſtroyed. Watch, and make not your watching your burden: but take up with it in a goſpel-way, which is the eaſy way, and the pleaſant way. How? You know it is not the buſineſs of the watch to fight the enemies; but, whenever the enemy appears, to go and tell the captain-general: ſo, your buſineſs in watching is not to go forth againſt the enemy; but whenever you ſee him appearing, whenever Satan attacks, by any temptation, and upon the very firſt motion of the enemy, go and tell

tell the Captain of ſalvation, ſaying, "Lord, here is the "enemy; Lord help me." See that you miſtake not Chriſt, when you cry to him, and he ſeemeth not to hear and anſwer. Miſtake him not; the woman of Canaan knew the mind of Chriſt better; notwithſtanding all the repulſes ſhe met with, ſhe looked through them all to his kind heart. Remember what David did Pſal. lxxxv. 8. "I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak:" I will hear him. Satan, ſin, and the world put in their word; but they have never a good word to ſay of Chriſt: therefore, I will not hear what they ſay, nor what unbelief ſaith, nor whatever the enemy ſaith; but "I will hear what God the Lord will ſay; he will ſpeak peace," as a God in Chriſt reconciling the word to himſelf: he ſpeaks peace in the covenant of grace. He ſpeaks peace in his word; I will hear him, and liſten to his word. Come to Jeſus, ſaying, "Lord, help me." However great the congregation is, yet there is room in Chriſt for you all: therefore, I beg you will all come to him, and wait on him; and come you muſt to him, or periſh. Let the echo of your ſoul then be, We have come unto thee, O Lord; *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee.*

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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